

# **The Importance Information and Communication Technologies in Communication**

## **Introduction**

ICT stands for Information and Communication Technology/Technologies and refers to all the technologies that permit to access, gather, manipulate and present or communicate information; these technologies could include hard-wares such as computers and other devices and software applications and connectivity e.g. access to the internet, local networking infrastructure, video conferencing. (Toomey 2001, p.3)

It is noticeable that technology is dominating the whole world; we find computer and internet almost in all houses, companies and universities; Belgium & law (2000) stated, "From the beginnings in 1980, ICT has facilitated all aspect of life, work, leisure and education". The most influenced population is the youngsters, who perceive this technology as an etiquette that holds modern ideas and thinking.

## **Types of ICT**

The different types of ICT may include electronic mail, video conferencing, facsimile and telephone conferencing. ICT communication deals with storage, retrieval transmission and manipulation of digital information. These ICT devices are used to promote the communicative skills such as speaking and writing.

## **Computers**

A computer is an electronic device that manipulates information, or data. It has the ability to store, retrieve and process data. We can use a computer to type documents, send email, play games, and browse the web, also we use it to edit or create spreadsheets, presentations, and even videos. There are several types of computers and they consist of many components namely; software, which is set of instructions, that tells the hardware what to do and how to do it. For examples, the software include web browser, games and word processors. While Hardware is any part of your computer that has a physical structure, such as the keyboards or mouse, it also includes all of the computer's internal parts.

## **Internet**

It is a very useful tool had been spreading all over the world in different fields. The net turn out to be not just essential in the daily life but also considered as a tool of communication and a new face of technology. According to ( Murugappan , 2000,26) " Internet is a "network of networks" that consists of millions of private and public , academic , business , and government networks of local to global scope that are linked by copper wires , fibres-optic cables , wireless connections and other technologies". According to the Oxford Dictionary, the

internet is “A vast computer network linking smaller computer networks worldwide. The internet includes commercial, educational, governmental, and other networks, which use the same set of communications protocols.”

### **Projector**

It is an electronic device used to project rays of lights. An apparatus with a system of lenses to project images or film into a screen, widely used for many applications such as conference room presentation, classroom training, home theatre and concerts. There are three different types of projectors namely CRT (Cathode Ray Tube), LCD (Liquid Cristal Display) and DLP (Digital Light Processing).

### **Whiteboards**

It is a shiny white board that can be wiped clean after being used for writing by markers. Also nicknamed as “the magic board” because the teacher used it as a big screen to project computer images during his lesson to a group of learners. Whereas, in foreign countries they use Interactive whiteboard. They are teaching while learning resources used for displaying and interacting with content, they are generally used throughout schools and workplaces. Interactive whiteboards display a computer screen via a projector, which can be manipulated by teachers and students using their hands as mouse or specialised pens, which are included with the software.

### **Integrating Speaking in EFL Classes Using Video Conferencing**

Technology in language teaching is not new. In fact, it has been around for decades but it is becoming important more and more in both our personal and professional lives. The technology itself demands different techniques of presenting data. For instance, video conferencing seems to be a substitute for the common classroom communication, therefore, is appealing as a teaching medium. The use of VC within teaching enables better teacher-student interaction.

Video conferencing is the real time oral and visual interaction among students. In an EFL classroom, video conferencing “motivates students to prepare projects and presentations for a real out-of-the classroom audience”. (Roux, 2000, p.1). In addition, it gives students the opportunity to interact and practice their speaking skills with native speakers of the target language, as well as to gain cultural insights and awareness. Video conferencing provides EFL students the opportunity to participate in genuine conversations with native speakers. In addition, VC helps students find new methods for improving their speaking and decrease the use of translation inside classroom. Video conferencing can depend on a range of technologies that have been developed and updated through different phases. There are three types of

videoconferencing based on capabilities, cost, and quality of audio and video transmission, like VC held in special meeting rooms, VC supported by picture, telephone and computer-supported video conferencing between offices so-called desktop video conferences.

### **Using Social Networks to Develop Communication**

Social networks have gained a status in nowadays people's life because of the huge benefits; it serves to the society in general and the educational process in particular. Within the learning process of a certain language, students need to be completely involved in the practice of the target language for an effective and rapid enhancement of language competency. Therefore, the exposure to the target language input constitutes a core-tone in learning operation. This is what social networks can provide for students in enjoyable way. Students who are learning English as Target Language can easily experience, and encounter it once they log into their social networks. We can say that this new generation are lucky because of the different available social networks that develop their speaking abilities. These web sites help lot learners to express themselves in authentic way. Therefore, EFL teachers can support students with this type of social networking activity by practicing a speech that they want to record before sharing it with the rest of the online community.

There are various sites of social networks that are widely used by EFL learners and even teachers, narrowing down some of them.

### **Using Skype to Develop Speaking Skill**

Skype is such an online source of social media that EFL learners can use for speaking skills proficiency through audio and video call with their friends, colleague, class-fellows, and teachers. Skype considered as one of the most important tools of communication that enables the EFL learners to create a suitable environment for them and discuss different type of topics like homework, class assignment that may help them to feel at ease to speak. Through Skype EFL, learners are able to exchange their views and ideas with others without any fee or resistance of speaking English. Skype was considered as less important social media but he changed the views because of the huge role played in teaching learning process of English language. There are some features of Skype use of English language learning:

1. It is used for conference call that can be used for speaking practice with friends, native speakers, and teachers.
2. The other function of Skype is that of file sharing. This feature of Skype is useful for English language learners to share files with other English language learners.

3. The next one is screen sharing, this is also one of the most important features of Skype. For example, in video call the students may share screen during the call for more explanation.

Skype is an important tool for English language learning, because it motivates learning proficiency. Similarly, some researchers highlighted that Skype chat is not only useful for speaking skill development of English learners but it is also beneficial for reading skill development. Thus, it may be concluded that using Skype enhance EFL learners speaking ability and motivate them for further study and correction of various mistakes in their pronunciation and speaking fluency.

### **Using Facebook to Develop Communication**

Facebook is one of the most famous sites on the internet; “Mark Zuckerberg” creates it in 2004. It allows registered users to create profiles, upload photo and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family, classmates and even teachers. Several studies have been conducted to investigate whether social networking can be used as a tool in the educational field. Many studies have revealed positive impacts from the use of FB as an online learning community and a successful tool for formal teaching and learning activities. The findings revealed that FB as online learning environment facilitates, supports, and encourages students English language learning. In addition, student’s motivation and confidence towards English language learning improved via Facebook as Blattner and Fiori (2009, p15) state, “FB can be used to improve students’ performance of English language, increase motivation and trigger authentic language interaction”.

Hence, in EFL speaking class, Facebook is used as a platform to enhance students speaking skill, and build their confidence in speaking English and allow them to develop their learning goals and strategies. There are groups dedicated to learning English languages in EFL and ESL contexts on Facebook. These groups have been set up specifically for learning English and vocabularies. For instance, there is a page on FB that is named “Improve English Vocabulary», it contains thousands of EFL Followers who post every day words with their images that can reduce their spelling errors during their speaking. Similarly, for EFL teachers should incorporate the use of Facebook in their teaching activities in order to make the lessons more fun and interactive. Hanafi, ET all (2013, p23) identify some advantages for using Facebook as an EFL tool as follows:

- 1) It enables students to use L2 for real life purposes.
- 2) It exposes students to authentic materials.
- 3) It allows students to communicate with native speakers.

- 4) It provides students with access to unlimited resources online (news, audios, videos, etc.).
- 5) It allows students to understand L2 culture

### **Using YouTube to Develop Speaking Skill**

YouTube is another popular social network site and vast resource for educational content. YouTube launched in 2005 as a video sharing website which has allowed millions of people to easily upload, download, view, and share video clip through several different platforms. Using YouTube both inside and outside the classroom can enhance conversation, listening, and pronunciation skills, improve vocabulary development, stimulate learner autonomy, promote L2 cultural competence and increase exposure to World English's. YouTube is a widespread website that can be used by teachers and students as an online learning tool to create forums where questions are asked using voice recordings or videos instead of texts only. It can be used to help students develop their oral skills by having them reply to questions using voice-recorded answers or videos and by hearing the recorded answers from other students. This online language-learning tool is particularly useful in language teaching, where teachers can post questions in the Target Language and their students respond orally to those questions. In this free online language-learning course, students will learn how to create talk-groups and initiate discussion forums to get people discussing a topic, and how to be notified when someone responds. This free language-learning course will be of great interest for teachers who would like to see how this new technique could help them improve their students' oral skills. Burke, ET all (2009) identified some advantages for using YouTube as an instructional tool as follows:

- 1) It provides a wealth of authentic and reliable video materials.
- 2) It offers real-life examples and visual demonstrations of the topics and concepts covered in class.
- 3) It provides lesson/lecture launchers to promote discussion and critical thinking.
- 4) It provides students with access to unlimited resources online (news, audios, videos, etc.).
- 5) It allows students to understand L2 culture.

### **The Advantages of Using ICT in Class**

Today, information and communication technologies have gained a groundswell of interest in the world, has changed the face of teaching and learning. The use of ICT in education becomes a priority during the last decade; however, implementing these ICT tools in the classroom are tough for many EFL teachers and students. Yet, Applying ICT in teaching

learning process is not only important but also essential in order to enhance learners speaking skills; many scholars believe that when teachers integrate ICTs they bring the real world into classroom. These are the main advantages of using Information and communication technology:

- ICT develops the collaborative and team working.
- It offers teachers new ways of teaching in order to enhance learners speaking capacities.
- ICT motivates both teachers and students, and makes learning process more enjoyable.
- ICT offers interaction that provide more occasions for pupils to act as inventors and manipulators on the learning process.
- It makes students in the oral session more responsible to develop their speaking skill.
- ICT allows students to interact with native speakers through e-mail, audio and video conferencing.
- ICT helps a teacher to guide his students about the English language learning materials available on internet, e-books, e-journals, e-magazines and social sites like linked-in, which are helpful in better learning of English language skills.
- ICT is helpful in the professional development of the teachers. A teacher can learn various language skills with the help of information and communication technologies. He can do various certification programmes in teaching COE run by the famous educational institutions like Cambridge University, British Council etc. These programmes help in enhancing his capacity to create new activities for learners in order to enhance their speaking abilities.
- ICT places all learners on equal footing. Given the right hardware, software and curriculum activities, even severely disadvantages pupils can achieve the same degree of success as anyone else.
- ICT has been shown to have benefits in terms of motivating pupils. That comes about partly through factors like being able to produce nice work with no teachers red marks all over it, and partly because the computer is seen as being impartial and non-judgemental in its feedback to the pupils.
- ICT enables pupils to experiment with changing aspects of a model, which may be difficult or even impossible for them to do. For example, pupils can use webcams to capture the development of their oral skills through time.

### **Disadvantages of ICT**

The act of using ICT in communication is a complex process that learners may encounter:

- ❖ ICT causes the loss of performance.
- ❖ ICT causes the loss of time and energy for those who are ICT illiterate.
- ❖ ICT causes laziness because information can be easily downloaded from the web.
- ❖ ICT changes good behaviours to bad behaviours.
- ❖ Attention tends to be very low when using ICT.
- ❖ motivation is too low when using ICT. Students might concentrate on other things.
- ❖ The internet is not always accessible.
- ❖ Internet unfamiliarity causes lack of training in second language classroom.

### **Conclusion**

It must be stressed that ICT plays an incredible role of in developing communicative skills. It helps them express their ideas and communicate in the target language. Therefore, the use of ICT tools in communication cannot be avoided. Teachers are supposed to be aware of the use of these materials to create a joyful atmosphere where students are expected to respond positively towards these technological materials.

### **Bibliography**

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