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**Shifting Paradigms of Teaching and Learning English through  
Social and Electronic Media for the Students of General English  
Class in the Mofussil Area of Gujarat**

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## Abstract:

The COVID catastrophe has produced the sea change in our day-to-day life and higher education system is not an exception. The most affected area is perhaps the education all across the world. The entire system has undergone many sweeps and shifts during past a year and half. Our classes in colleges and universities have seen empty benches with no students. The thing is that the teachers came forward with the solution of this bizarre phenomenon and found out the solution with the help of technology. On the other hand, the students remaining at their homes have started self-learning with the help of social and electronic media available to them. As far as the learning and teaching of English is concerned, there is a paradigm shift in the process of interaction with the help of *Whatsapp, Facebook, YouTube, Google* and other such platforms. The research in this direction shows that there is a lot of changes has been happening in the field of learning language and literature. The online classes have played a vital role as the students cannot attend offline classes. The words like online, live, join and leave the class are at the tip of our tongue now-a-days. The distribution of Tablets among college students by the government of Gujarat has helped them to familiarise with the new digital world. The teachers have also learnt many new things in online classes.

**Key Words:** ESL, Mofussil Area, General English Class, LL Tools: social media, Electronic media, techno-savvy generation, Internet

*"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head; if you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart."*

**-Nelson Mandela**

Teaching English to a General English class in an undergraduate college is not considered to be a pleasant job for the teacher of English in India in general and in Gujarat in particular. A teacher teaching to an undergraduate general English class faces certain challenges before him as the classes are heterogeneous types. In a multilingual country like India, a teacher not knowing regional language finds it very difficult to interact with his diverse class. One more thing that makes the thing worse is the poor condition of school education. Students come to a general English class with very limited knowledge of the language.

This is perhaps English is considered comparatively hard to learn by the students. This perception of difficulty takes hold of almost every undergraduate college in Gujarat. With the help of sound knowledge of



the latest teaching tools and resources available, this tedious task may be made easier and enjoyable. This may bear the fruitful results for the students of the general classes residing especially in the Mofussil areas like ours in Gujarat whose knowledge of the language is not at the par with their counterparts studying in the urban regions. Therefore, it is quite necessary for the teachers of English in the colleges in such backward and tribal rural areas to polish their teaching assignments with the help of the latest electronic gadgets and applications so as to facilitate their students who learn English as a second language.

There is no doubt about it that English is the most important of all the languages in the age of communication & technology. Since the whole world has been transformed into a small "*global village*", people have got a lot of opportunities and challenges to communicate and to interact with one another. The field of the trade and business is flourished with the marketing and advertisement. Internet facility has made this world a web interwoven with all the other 'nets' of the world all around the globe. In such kind of scenario around us, one can understand the importance of the medium of communication one chooses as his tool. The expansion digitisation in India has proved that English has very much helped the experts and the students in many ways.

### **Challenges of Teaching and learning English as Second language**

English language in India has its presence for more than 400 years. It is one of the official languages of India. It is a link language between the people of the different states of the nation. The Indian writers in English have shown that they are not lesser than the native authors. The world has accepted this fact as the works written by the famous writers like R. K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai and Arundhati Roy have received an international fame. In spite of such a brilliant impact of the English language on the Indian Psyche; it is still a tough language to learn for the students in Gujarat. The students still consider the language a foreign tongue and a kind of a compulsory task to perform while doing his or hers respective academic course. Though, the insatiable desire always remains in their hearts to be a fluent speaker of English and to impress their fellow mates with the use of the language in their interaction with one another.

There are certain glitches of teaching and learning of English observed by the distinguished academicians and the reputed English Language Teaching Institutes in India. However, such institutes have produced helpful techniques and materials to learn and to teach the foreign language in Indian schools and colleges. In



spite of all these things, there are specific difficulties which hinder learning English for our students. They are mostly as under:

- The confusion of applying single window method.
- The deficiency of suitable infrastructure.
- Dearth of efficient teachers.
- Age-old examination system.
- Lack of learner-friendly atmosphere in the campuses.

### **Assignments for the Teacher of English teaching General English Class**

Ours is the tribal, backward and rural area of Gujarat where people are disadvantaged from the economic and educational infrastructure we find in the urban areas of the state. The students residing here have the minimal exposure of the standard language therefore they are not very aware of using even their mother tongue properly and effectively. When they speak or use language they have fear of speaking English and therefore learning English is difficult for them. We as teachers have to try hard to change their attitude and tendency to go away from the language. Lack of motivation and also the easy access of the language. As a result, we have to find out the solutions to overcome the problem of minimum exposure of English for them. We have very handy instrument in the form of technology and media to help them resolve all these issues related to learn English as a second language. It seems that the Post-COVID condition is a blessing in disguise as they have already learned using all these platforms.

### **Creating Personal Learning Environment through Social Media**

The teacher should facilitate the students with the material and exposure to learn the foreign language. Learning should not stop in the middle of it and therefore it is very important that the teacher keeps a close eye on the process. In the age of science and technology, the younger generation in India is now getting used to the digital gadgets. For them, day begins and ends with any such tool in their hands. We as the teachers of English have to take advantage of this passion of the students for the electronic and digital gadgets. These tools may make miracle for them to learn language. The introduction of Information and Communication Tools (ICT) like computer, TV and internet has transformed the atmosphere of today's classroom. The present-day classroom is not only for the old style of one-way lecturing. Rather, the classroom of today has



become a place for sharing many things, producing healthy interaction and creating even newer things for the enlightenment of learning within the group. It is very interesting to note here to have an easy accessibility of information and data. The learner has not to be bothered to go to library all the time to refer a bulky book to have the source of the information needed.

Even the availability of books in e-form and in the traditional form is not a matter of stress as it used to be in the past. The online platforms like '*Flipkart*' and '*Amazon*' have made the thing easy for us to have any book at your doorstep within a day or two. Students and teachers use their smart phones regularly to be in touch with the world of information and knowledge. The social media has also a more important role to play to learn language. The thing is that we all have to rethink and introduce the techniques that can help our students learn English in an innovative way. The teachers of English will have to produce the digital materials in the forms of images, audios, videos and slides. Each and every teacher has his/her role to play to contribute his share. (Williams, M. D., Rana, N. P., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2015))

Technology is currently being used to make teaching and learning more engaging and stimulating. We see more and more websites and applications such as Facebook, YouTube, twitter and email becoming part of the teaching and learning process. Probably the most widely used social networking site in the world, social media enables people to share and get in touch with other people who make up their network (Selwyn, 2007). They also serve to facilitate online communication, interrelation and cooperation. A large number of students rely on social media as a means to get in touch with friends. Dalton, J. (2009) found that the youth mainly used social media about an hour daily to socialize with friends. This shows what potential social media has as a method for online learning. Ranked in the top 20 countries with the most social media users, the social networking site is now an essential aspect of daily life. Apparently, social media are highly likely to prove advantageous to students should it be capitalized on as part of the learning process.

The fast development of technology facilitates the birth of fast growing social media tools that are increasingly being used by students in social and academic settings. In academia, social networking sites are deemed as valuable in language learning as their setup supports the broadcasting of authentic language, and encourage meaningful interfaces outside the lecture halls. As students are ready for technological changes in learning, it is time that higher education institutions harness their potential to better serve the students' creative needs. At present, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are popular forms of SNS with a high rate of



university students' demography. Hence, they could be employed as mobile learning tools to positively impact language learning.

English is the official language of the world. However, the traditional methods of teaching English in India reduced English language learning to mechanical memorization and miserably fail to develop language competency among the students as it depends largely on lecturing and is mostly done in the traditional chalk-and talk way. These stereotyped methods and teaching material makes the learning a monotonous activity and creates distaste among the students by reducing them to mere passive receptors of language and not active participants in the learning process. Students have little chance to use English in communication and limited exposure to academic English, therefore, they are often unable to fully comprehend lectures or actively participate in class discussions. Many are also hampered in their ability to express themselves in writing. Dahdal, S. (2020)

### **The Wide Influence of Modern Electronic Media and Internet in Language learning**

Learning a language can sometimes be a challenging and frustrating experience. At times, you might feel that you have reached a no man's land and motivating yourself can become difficult. Don't forget that speaking a second language, not only opens new doors but also has numerous other advantages. Electronic media, including the devices that were brought along, did become a changing power of society. While dealing with this changing power more closely, it becomes conspicuous that the electronic media in the form of TV channels and websites functions as a significant force.

When the Internet's power is evaluated from a superficial perspective the thoughts that the Internet creates new words, makes prevailing words disappear, uses abbreviations instead and spreads the results on weblogs or other social media sites, comes to mind easily. However, the Internet brought various changes. One of its obvious ones is the way people talk to each other due to modern technology; looking on a phone screen has replaced looking into other people's eyes. Besides, the society is not forced to leave their safe homes anymore because anything that might be needed is available on the Internet, ready to be clicked on. It seems like this medium has made life easier but what is also mandatory to take into consideration are all the negative side effects that electronic media brought along: The loss of punctuation and spelling skills due to texting and the need of including as much information as possible in as little text as possible or the standardization of using abbreviations.



The Internet has changed the way we communicate, the way we do organize our everyday life including the way we work out. Besides, all of these changes none might be as influential as language change. One can say that the Internet, obviously, created the Internet Language and therefore caused a new chapter of language change. Language change can occur due to various triggers. Moreover, it is important to understand that language change constantly surrounds members of society because from generation-to-generation changes occur in language and the usage of words. Today, a new word can achieve a global profile within hours. It seems likely that the Internet will speed up the process of language change. It may not need any discussion to agree that several neologisms only exist because the Internet made them. According to Crystal examples for those would be: “blog, blogging, and blogger” Shih, Y. E. (2007).

## **Conclusion:**

Writing is one of the four language skills that requires a special attention. It is a significant skill in language production as its role is to convey the message accurately and effectively, and its proficiency plays a major role in communication. Writing is the most challenging area in learning the second language. University students are neither knowledgeable nor skilled enough to feel confident to communicate efficiently and effectively, using English as a foreign language. Language teaching has a number of dimensions, which include the development of oral expression, written skills, literature, and creativity noted that students do not write very often and most of what they write is classroom-bound. The most important factor in writing exercises is that students need to be personally involved in order to make the learning experience of great value and make learning more meaningful and more exciting. Many of us know that with practice comes perfection, especially when it comes to writing. The more we write, the better we become as writers. Social media can be a tool where students are encouraged to use their creativity combined with personal expression to improve and strengthen their writing. It is the pious duty of a teacher of the language to create such a healthy atmosphere of his students to nourish this skill at all the levels.



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