Influence of Information and Communication Technology on Students'
Motivation in Learning English: A study of Kashmiri Private Schools.

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ABSTRACT

Information and communication technology plays a vital role in every aspect of human life. Technology has become a great source for motivating the learners towards learning. It makes the learners creative and innovative. It influences every aspect of education from teaching- learning to assessment and evaluation. Using ICT in the field of education, the teaching methods have become learner-centered. The tools under ICT provide the students new ways of reading and writing which enhance English language teaching and learning. This paper explores several benefits of implementing ICT in the classroom. It also studies the impacts of ICT in motivating learners in learning English.

Key words: ICT, English learning, Motivation, Private Schools.

Introduction

Today's age is the age of information and technology. ICT has become a part and parcel of everyday life. It has become an indispensable component of our society. It has an impact on almost all aspects of life. ICT has become an incredible asset in every area of our lives. One cannot imagine being deprived of it. It is constantly used in various sectors like education, corporate, health, economic etc. UNESCO defines ICT as "forms of technology that used to transmit, process, store, create, display, share or exchange information by electronic means." In the field of education, teachers as well students utilize ICT tools as a source of teaching and learning respectively. Nowadays, English language teachers involve ICT in their teaching in order to make students' learning more effective and motivating. According to Heemskerk et al. (2012), "ICT in education is assumed to contribute to educational equality due to its motivating effects on students and the opportunities it offers for facilitating differentiation and individualization." The tools under information and communication technology (ICT) allow the storage and retrieval of information and provide universal access to education. It provides assistance to learners to learn more effectively and offers teachers access to a wide range of new pedagogy. Implementing ICT in classrooms can change the whole process of teaching and learning. It not only motivates the learners towards learning and

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makes them active learners but also helps teachers to make the teaching-learning process more meaningful and interactive, thereby, transforming classrooms as well as schools. According to Davis and Tearle (1999), "ICT tools have the potential to innovate, accelerate, enrich and deepen skills; to motivate and engage students; and to help relate school experience to work practices". Teachers can play an important role to increase students' motivation to learn a language, as Dornyei (2001) states "teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectively."

Review of Literature

The objective of this study is to explore the impact of ICT in motivating students in learning English i.e. whether students' motivation is affected through the use of ICT or not. Mcgroaty (2002) states that if students see learning as meaningful and know why they learn, they are likely to raise their level of motivation. Various studies have been conducted regarding this field; some of them are:

Prashene, Vijaylaxmi Shivmurthi conducted a study on the use of information and communication technology in English language teaching at college level in Maharashtra. The findings show that "Information and Communication Technology has a positive impact on English language teaching. Its use in the classroom makes the learners feel confident and interactive. Moreover, activities involved in ICT based teaching- learning prepare learners for future when they enter the real workforce."

Hee- Jung and Sang (2004) have worked on opportunities in a technology-enhanced language learning classroom environment. Their findings reveal that the application of technological tools in a classroom can reduce learners' level of stress and promote and motivate them to participate in the teaching-learning process. This motivation is further enhanced when the learning environment involves interactive tasks, authentic tasks and materials.

Strambi and Bouvet (2003) have studied a mixed-mode environment for language learning. The study has shown that ICT provides the flexibility of material and learning tool as well as an abundance of information. As a result, learners are offered with different learning styles and learning environments that could promote interactivity and more exposure to authentic materials.

Norlida and Supyan (2002) have worked on E-learning in a writing course at Tenaga National University. They find that there are positive changes in students' motivation and confidence level after getting exposed to web based teaching and learning materials.

Allegra, Chifari and Ottaviano (2001) in their study ICT to train students towards creative thinking concluded that incorporating the ICT tools has been proven to stimulate students in expressing their creativity.

Methodology

For the present study, the data is collected from various private schools of Kashmir using ICT in their classrooms in general and in English class in

particular. These schools are equipped with smart classrooms. The students participating in this study are from primary level classes. The data is collected from both male as well as from female students. The main research tool used for eliciting data from the students is a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into two sections; section A deals with the influence of ICT on learners motivation and section B deals with the use of ICT in English classes.

The data for this study is codified, tabulated and quantified for every informant and transferred to statistical figures to analyse the results more easily. Stukat (2005) argues that "the researcher should describe the results in tabular or figure form and penetrate the results so clearly and completely that readers can draw their own conclusions and have the opportunity to compare them with the researchers". Therefore graphs have been included for each question, thereby provide an analysis by identifying patterns and interpret data.

Results and Analysis

The present paper investigates whether ICT has an effect on the learners' motivation or not. Here is presented the outcome of research and the results using figures and percentages. In the figures, the x-axis represents the answers and the y-axis represents the number of learners who respond to the questions in percentages.

Section A:

Q1: ICT provides enjoyment and makes learning easier.

Q2: Students get motivated by ICT.

Q3: ICT develops concentration among the learners.

Q4: ICT makes the classroom lively.
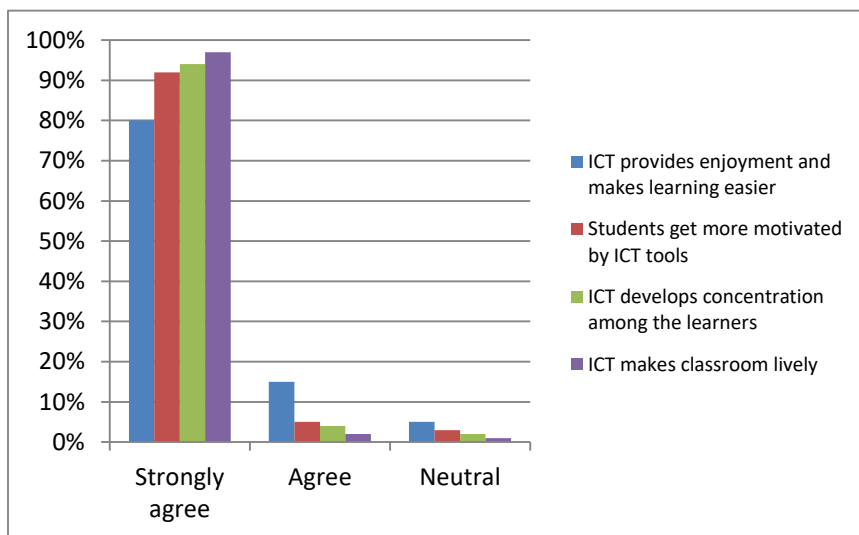
The above figure illustrates the percentage of respondents on the statements related to the use of ICT in classrooms. Majority of the students i.e.80% strongly agreed and 15% agreed and 5% were neutral to the statement that ICT provides enjoyment and makes learning easier. They grasp the subject matter more easily with the help of ICT. Students respond positively to the statement (Q2) when 92% strongly agreed and 5% agreed and 3% were neutral on the statement that ICT tools motivate the learners in language classes. ICT develops concentration among learners in the classroom. In this regard, 94% were strongly agreed and 4% were agreed and 2% were neutral. Meanwhile, while asking students' last question of section A, 97% strongly agreed, 2% agreed and 1% was neutral to the statement that ICT tools make classroom lively.
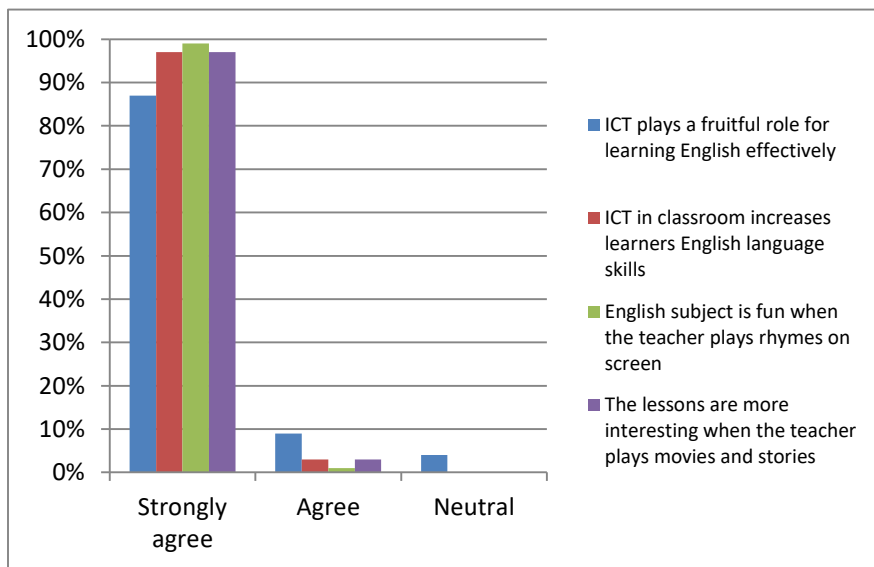
Section B:

Q5: ICT plays a fruitful role in learning English.

Q6: ICT in the classroom increases learners English language skills.

Q7: English subject is fun when the teacher plays rhymes on screen.

Q8: The lessons are more interesting when the teacher plays movies.

Effective teachers are the most influential factor contributing to students' achievement. So in this question, students agreed that learning becomes effective with the help of ICT. It was found that 87% strongly agreed, 9% agreed and4% were neutral that ICT plays a fruitful role in learning English effectively. Regarding Q6, students agreed that their language skills get improved by using ICT tools in English class. They believed that playing English songs, videos and short stories can improve their listening and speaking skills. In this regard, 97% strongly agreed and 3% agreed to the statement that their language skills increase with the help of ICT. The result of the next questions (Q7 and Q8) shows that a large number of students thought it was fun to learn English since 99% of the students strongly agreed to it. The learners

become happier when the teacher shows pictures and plays rhymes on screen. They are of the view that using ICT in English class makes lessons more interesting and in this regard, 97% students strongly agreed 3% agreed that lessons become more interesting when the teacher plays movies, songs and short stories in English class.

Conclusion

The major conclusion of the study is that the use of ICT tools has become an immense factor that contributes to learners' achievement by increasing motivation, attention, and confidence among learners. Results show that learning English through ICT tools is very beneficial in order to develop motivation which is an important factor in the success of students. Upon interaction with the English teachers, they were also of the opinion that it is easier to manage the class and motivate the students by using ICT tools. Traditional methods of teaching are not enjoyable for learners rather they make class boring. Therefore, smart boards, projectors, internet, e- books are being used nowadays which make learning interesting, enjoyable and motivating. The study revealed that learners use e-books to develop reading skills. By audio video, the learners can improve their listening and speaking skills. The students are taught practically and there is better learning. It was also seen that the students respond negatively towards not using the ICT tools in the classroom. The findings showed that the usage of ICT in the education field increases the efficiency of students. ICT makes learners active and creative. It can be concluded that students get motivated and more satisfaction by using ITC in language learning.

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