English language teaching through the Internet at Post COVID-19 age in India: Views and Attitudes

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Abstract

Information Technology in developing countries always is a new and critical topic, and looking at it as an alternative for traditional education, especially in English language learning and teaching, makes conservative educational systems and trainers to have a pessimistic view on it. Some of them look at internet-based courses and universities as a certificate producing companies.

In developing countries, especially in India, IT has a special place in teaching the English language where not only it is a complement for traditional education but also it works independently as online English courses, online English institutes, and virtual Universities. The nationwide lockdown in response to COVID-19 has forced more than 300 Million Indian students to stay at home.

The researchers in the present study investigated by a questionnaire with 30 questions related to online or internet-based English teaching and learning programs from the view of English Learners and trainers. The researchers got the responses of 181 academic English learners and trainers from fifteen Universities all around India.

In this study, researchers found the importance of online English teaching at post COVID-19 age in India as well as the English Learners and trainers views and attitudes on internet-based English learning and teaching programs.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Internet, COVID-19.

Introduction:

Information Technology in developing countries always is a new and critical topic, and looking at it as an alternative for traditional education, especially in English language learning and teaching, makes conservative educational systems and trainers to have a pessimistic view on it. Some of them look at internet-based courses and universities as a certificate producing companies (Shamoosi & Moinzadeh, 2008).

In developing countries, especially in India, IT has a special place in teaching the English language where not only it is a complement for traditional education but also it works independently as online English courses, online English institutes, and virtual Universities. As the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the closure of schools and universities across the globe, teaching has moved online (kwatra, 2020). The nationwide lockdown in India in response to COVID-19 has forced more than 300 Million Indian students to stay at home.

Online education in India has come a long way with the development of technology. India is one of the nations that is developing at an exponential rate in terms of technology. With a population of more than 1.3 billion, the availability of high-speed Internet and smartphones, India has the most number of technologically driven persons. The online education market in India was worth $ 247 million in 2016, which is expected to grow by about $ 1.96 billion by 2021. That is a compound annual growth rate of 52%. The number of users enrolled for various online learning courses is estimated to be 1.6 Million in 2016, Which is expected to grow by about 9.6 Million by the end of 2021. It is estimated that there is a 175% increase in the cost of classroom education; this gives online education more preferred because it is cost-effective. Nearly 48% population in India between 15–40 age groups with high aspirations, but lower-income is a good target market for online education. Moreover, the acceptability of online channels is high in the younger demographic (online education in India, 2019).

Purpose of the study:

The main aim of this study was to find the importance of online English teaching at post COVID-19 age in India as well as the English Learners and trainers views and attitudes on internet-based English learning and teaching programs. In addition to the above we can add other aims of the current study as the following:

- To investigate the importance of contents in online English Programs.
- To investigate the Effects of educational development on Indian society.
- Comparison of traditional and online teaching methods.
- To investigate the effects of internet-based English learning and teaching on its traditional role.
- The find the possibility of complementing the real sessions of teaching with online mode
- To find whether the online English language programs threaten the efficacy of the private sector as well as state institutions and Universities or not.
- To investigate that Do the cultural considerations of Indian society against the online English programs or not?
- To find the importance of time and economic efficiency in online English programs.
- To identify the Suitability of online English programs for professional English language teachers, translators, and Literature teachers.
- To investigate the profitability of online English language programs.

Literature Review

The 21st century being the era of many modern and sophisticated technologies, different fields offers us to make the best use of these technologies. After tape recorder and overhead projector (OHP) (Pamela, 2020) internet has become an essential part of English language classrooms for its significant and remarkable role in delivering and learning lessons.

The Internet has been used widely in all aspects of human life. It is mainly used to connect people all around the world through social networking in purpose for sharing an idea, getting fellows, mailing, data exchange. Moreover, it also becomes an opportunity in the business industry, education, politics. For academic purposes, it is assumed as the most comfortable way to obtain relevant information, literature, or references (Sywal, Patahuddin, & Nasrullah, 2017). Ito et al. (Grace, Raghavendra, Newman, Wood, & Connell, 2014) claimed that "the use of internet technology for social networking is a pervading feature of youth culture today, with social and recreational online media used as much and as often as possible."

The Internet has been used worldwide and changed the pattern of life. The Internet has become the most popularly used in academic environments by both academic staff and learners (Okon E., 2010). Internet is a global super-highway through which decisions are now being made more quickly than ever before (Akporido,

2005), and it has had powerful and pervasive effects on every part of our lives, including business, education, health, transport, communications, and industry among others (Sywal, Patahuddin, & Nasrullah, 2017).

The Internet is already an integral element of education in (over)developed nations, and we can be confident that its worldwide educational significance will continue to increase throughout this decade (Selwyn, 2014). The use of the Internet plays a critical role in English education, ranging from school to higher education.

The Internet has undoubtedly prompted ongoing debate and concern within the educational community. On the one hand, many educationalists are busying themselves with rethinking and reimagining the notion of the school and the university in ways that respond to the demands of the Internet age (Selwyn, 2014).

Today the Internet provides a wide range of opportunities associated with different aspects of education. Currently, the global network allows us to get a higher education, to study a foreign language at option, to refresh the acquired long ago knowledge. As for studying a foreign language, using the Internet, it is possible to improve the language skills considerably as well as to learn it practically from scratch. It is feasible through special services which allow not only to learn a language online but also to contact to the native speakers, to watch videos in a studied foreign language with the necessary comments on the lexical structure of a video (Molchanova, 2014)

All the programs intended for studying English have one common disadvantage: the amount of the educational material put in them is minimal and even though the course of studying English can be called full, and the program itself–very successful and effective, nevertheless, the amount of the educational material, put in the program, does not give opportunities for achieving the level of English fluency (Clarke, 2004).

In this regard, as the sizes of Internet resources are enormous, the Internet gives unlimited opportunities for studying English. The global network provides an unlimited amount of teaching materials, including any important information, materials on regional geography, newspaper and journal articles, educational literature. (Peachey, 2012)

In recent years the researchers pay close attention to various aspects of the influence of the Internet on studying English: motivation (Petrovskaya & Rymanova, 2014); (Fufurina, 2014), technological (Rymanova, 2013); (Malinina, 2014)and didactic peculiarities (Kostina, 2010); (Azevich , 2012)

Research Methodology:

The main aim of this study was to find the importance of online English teaching at post COVID-19 age in India as well as the English Learners and trainers views and attitudes on internet-based English learning and teaching programs. The present study will be both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The data which has been collected by a questionnaire from a group of participants.

In order to conduct this study, the researchers have prepared a questionnaire which had 30 questions related to online or internet-based English teaching and learning programs from the view of English Learners and trainers. The researchers got the responses of 181 academic English learners and trainers from fifteen Universities all around India. All the participants were from the department of English at their universities. The selected Universities were from 4 main regions of India, which are: North, South, East, and West. The name of the selected Universities are as the following:

1. Aligarh Muslim University
2. Delhi University
3. Assam University

4. EFLU (The English And Foreign Languages University)

5. Banaras Hindu University

6. Jawaharlal Nehru University

7. Central University of Karnataka

8. Jamia Millia Islamia

9. University of Madras

10. University of Mumbai

11. Savitribai Phule Pune University

12. North-Eastern Hill University

13. Tezpur University

14. Mizoram University

15. University of Allahabad

In addition to the above, gender, age, nationality, and profession of the respondents are also considered.

Findings and discussions

The majority of the respondents, which is 77.9% of all the respondents, were from the age range of 21 to 30, and 13.8% were from the age range of 31-40.

48.1% of the respondents had a PhD degree, 40.9% with a Master's degree, 10.5% with a bachelor's degree, and the rest, which is 0.5%, had only advanced diplomas or certificates.

51.9% of the respondents were female, and the rest, which is 48.1%, were male.

75.1% of the respondents were English learners, and 24.9% were English professors as mentioned before, all the participants are from the department of English from the selected Universities.

90.6% of the participants were of Indian nationality, and 9.4% were foreigners.

89% of the participants believe that online English programs are among the inevitable requirements in India.

86.7% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the idea that online programs will facilitate and improve the status of English language education in India also 85.1% found online programs to be most useful for youth who are unable to attend universities in India.

87.3% agreed and strongly agree that Advanced technology is the key to the success of these programs at the post-COVID-19 age in India.

87.3% believed that online English language programs would be a step forward in the educational development of the society.

47.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the idea that online English language programs should copy the traditional methods of teaching. 26.5% responded neutrally and only 25.9 were agreed and strongly agreed.

38.1% believed that Online English language programs would marginalize the traditional role of English teachers; in contrast, 32.6% disagrees. Also, 29.3% were neutral.

83.5% agreed and strongly agreed that a successful online English language program should be complemented with real sessions of teaching, and only 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

37.6 of the respondents agreed that online English language programs would threaten the efficacy of private-sector and governmental institutions and universities. 35.3% disagreed.

52.4% of the respondents believed that Cultural considerations are the primary barrier against the success of such programs, and 19.9% disagreed.

82.9% found the idea of online English language programs useful, and only 5.5% were thinking this idea is a waste of time.

54.66% of the respondents found that Online English language programs are suitable for training professional English language teachers, translators, and English literature teachers. 15.7% disagreed.

59.1% of the respondents believed that online EFL programs are suitable only for short-term training. 17.2% disagreed, and 23.8% were neutral.

84.6% of the respondents had a favorable view with this idea that the success of online English language programs is not predictable unless they are implemented.

69.1% found online English language programs a profitable business, and 4.4 disagreed.

60.7% of the respondents agreed and strongly agree with this idea that online English language programs sound like a predictable success in India, but 16.6% disagreed.

Conclusion, suggestions, and limitations

The present study shows the high importance of online English programs, and these programs are among the inevitable requirements in India. Also, this should be considered by English language policymakers of India that online English language programs will facilitate and improve the status of English language education in India, and such these programs are much more useful than the present mode education.

In the post-COVID-19 age, where social distancing is important, this study found that online English language programs will be a step forward in the educational development of the society of India. So focusing on English language programs is essential.

Statistics of the present study show that online English language programs should find new methods of teaching which are different from traditional methods.

The current study found that a successful online English language program should be complemented with real sessions of teaching.

Based on the developing industry of IT in India, this study says that online English language programs have a clear and promising future. They are successful and profitable in India, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The researchers suggest that the same study should be done after finding the COVID-19 vaccine.

Besides the limitations of budget and time to conduct the present study, finding respondents in the lockdown of the country was so difficult.

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