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Context-Specific Strategies through AI Driven Tools for Effective English language Teaching in India

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Abstract

The use of modern digital technology in English language education has greatly impacted how globalization and language mixing work, especially in Indian college classrooms. Digital tools like Learning Management Systems, language learning apps, and AI-based resources help students improve their language skills while blending global languages with local ones. These tools make learning more accessible and interactive, allowing students to explore different languages and cultures, speeding up the mixing of languages.

As globalization grows, there is a higher demand for English, especially as a common language in academics and work. At the same time, digital tools help English coexist with local languages, encouraging students to switch between languages and create new hybrid forms of speech. This is especially important in India, where many languages are spoken, and colleges play a key role in both language innovation and cultural preservation. Digital platforms support this by allowing students to access global content while adapting it to their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds. While these developments offer many benefits, such as connecting people globally and overcoming language barriers, there are also challenges. Differences in digital literacy, limited resources, and a focus on dominant languages may end up pushing local languages aside. Therefore, integrating digital tools needs to be done carefully, balancing the benefits of globalization with the need to protect linguistic diversity. This study looks at how digital technology helps promote globalization and language mixing in Indian college classrooms. It examines how digital English learning tools manage the balance between global language standards and local language practices, and how they are changing language identities in today's interconnected world.

Key Words: Modern digital technology, English language learning, Indian tertiary classrooms, language acquisition, interactive learning, globalization, linguistic diversity.

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Introduction

English education in India has changed significantly over the years. What began as a tool for the British to control India is now a crucial part of education and a key skill in today's globalized world. English is widely seen as a means of social mobility, opening doors to better job opportunities and access to higher education worldwide. In fact, English has become a necessary skill for students to thrive in a competitive, interconnected world. However, despite its importance, English language education in India faces various challenges that hinder effective learning, especially at the tertiary level. In India, English has a unique status. It is both a second language and a foreign language, depending on the region and socio-economic background. English is the medium of instruction in many schools and universities and is also the official language of administration, the judiciary, and higher education. Moreover, English proficiency is essential for success in competitive exams and in corporate sectors, making it a key factor for social and economic advancement. However, the diversity of learners in India, shaped by different socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, presents many challenges for both students and teachers.

A major issue in English education in India is the unequal quality of teaching across regions. In rural and remote areas, the lack of infrastructure, qualified teachers, and learning resources such as libraries, computers, and the internet, hinders students' ability to learn English effectively. Many teachers in these areas are not adequately trained in modern teaching methods. Instead, they continue to rely on outdated rote-learning techniques that focus on memorization of grammar and vocabulary rather than fostering actual communication skills. This results in students who struggle to use English in real-life situations, limiting their overall language proficiency.

The socio-economic divide also plays a critical role in creating disparities in access to quality English education. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or marginalized communities often lack the support systems necessary to learn English effectively. These students may have little exposure to the language outside the classroom, making it difficult for them to acquire the language skills required for academic success or professional opportunities. In many cases, English is viewed as an intimidating subject rather than a means of self-expression or personal development.

Moreover, the education system's overemphasis on examinations, which primarily test students' memorization abilities, further exacerbates the problem. This focus on exams rather than practical language skills results in students learning English in a way that prioritizes theoretical knowledge over real-world communication. This often leaves students unprepared to use English fluently in daily life, at work, or in international academic settings. Additionally, there is a growing reliance on private coaching centers and online resources, which has led to the emergence of an education system where access to quality English

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education depends largely on financial resources. Students from affluent families can afford expensive coaching and online courses, while those from lower-income backgrounds are left with limited options, widening the gap in English proficiency across different socio-economic groups.

The rapid pace of globalization and the increasing use of English in all spheres of life has also led to the rise of "hybrid" forms of English, where regional languages and dialects blend with English. While this can be seen as a positive aspect of linguistic innovation, it can also make it harder for students to master standard English, which is often the language of formal education and professional settings. While English has become an essential tool for social and economic advancement in India, there are still significant challenges that need to be addressed. The lack of uniformity in teaching quality, socio-economic disparities, outdated pedagogical methods, and the pressure to perform well in exams all contribute to the difficulties in mastering English. Moving forward, it is crucial for the government, educational institutions, and educators to work together to bridge these gaps, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, have equal access to quality English education. This will enable them to use the language as a powerful tool for communication, personal growth, and professional success.

Psychological factors such as language anxiety and lack of motivation further impede learners' progress. In multilingual classrooms, learners often struggle to reconcile their native languages with English, resulting in code-switching and linguistic interference. This problem is compounded by a curriculum that often prioritizes written proficiency over oral communication, leaving students ill-prepared for real-world interactions. At the tertiary level, English language education is marred by a focus on theoretical aspects, with insufficient emphasis on practical application. Many college students lack adequate fluency and confidence in English, which affects their academic performance and employability. Despite the availability of modern digital tools and e-learning platforms, the digital divide continues to exclude many students from leveraging these technologies.

While English education in India has made strides in broadening access and enhancing curriculum content, significant challenges remain in achieving equitable and effective language learning outcomes. Addressing these issues requires a multi-pronged approach that includes teacher training, curriculum reform, integration of digital resources, and a focus on learner-centric methods that prioritize communication skills and cultural sensitivity. English education in India, when implemented inclusively and effectively, has the potential to empower learners and bridge social and economic divides.

Relevant Review of Literature

The role of English in Indian education has been widely discussed, especially in terms of its history, socio-economic impact, and the challenges students face in learning the

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language. Researchers have looked into the issues in the education system and what changes are needed to improve English teaching in India. English education in India began during the colonial period. In 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education made English the main language for higher education, aiming to create a group of educated Indians who could work with the British. This historical foundation still affects the education system today. After independence, English became a language of opportunity in India, seen as a way to access better jobs and education (Krishnaswamy & Krishnaswamy, 2006).

However, there are still big differences in how English is taught in urban and rural areas. Rural schools often don't have the same resources as urban schools, like libraries and digital tools, which are important for teaching English well (Dhar, 2014). The digital divide also makes things worse, especially with the rise of online education during the COVID-19 pandemic, where many rural students lacked access to the technology needed for learning (Mishra et al., 2020).

The qualifications of teachers and their teaching methods are crucial in shaping English education. Many teachers in India, especially in rural schools, are not properly trained to teach English as a second language (Agnihotri & Khanna, 1997). The traditional way of teaching, which focuses mainly on grammar and translation, does not help students develop real communication skills. Instead of practical language use, the curriculum often focuses on memorization and grammar rules. This method makes it harder for students to use English in everyday situations, leading to poor speaking and listening skills (Rao, 2019). Another challenge is language anxiety, especially for students who do not come from English-speaking backgrounds. Studies show that psychological factors, such as fear of making mistakes, can hold students back from learning English (Horwitz et al., 1986). Also, the way people in India view English as a symbol of social status complicates learning for many. Some students see it as something they must master to be successful, which can create unnecessary pressure and make the learning process more stressful (Annamalai, 2001).

In addition to these challenges, the increasing use of English in global media, technology, and business has made it even more important for students to learn it well. However, for many students, especially those from rural or disadvantaged backgrounds, the path to English proficiency is still blocked by factors such as lack of access to resources, outdated teaching methods, and social pressures. Moving forward, it is essential for the education system to address these issues by improving teacher training, updating curricula to focus on real-world language use, and providing equal access to resources for all students, regardless of their background. To truly make English accessible to all, there needs to be a shift in the way it is taught, moving away from rote learning and towards more practical, communicative methods that prepare students for real-life use of the language. Additionally,

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greater focus on reducing digital inequalities and language anxiety can help students feel more confident in their language learning journey.

Innovative approaches to teaching English, such as task-based learning and the integration of digital technologies, have shown promise. For example, task-based approaches that focus on real-world application enhance learner engagement and skill development (Ellis, 2003, p. 99). Similarly, digital tools like Duolingo and Kahoot provide interactive and accessible platforms for language practice (Mishra et al., 2020). The literature highlights the complex interplay of historical, infrastructural, and pedagogical factors in shaping English education in India. Addressing these challenges requires systemic reforms, including teacher training, curriculum redesign, and investment in digital resources.

Need for Novel Strategy with Digital Tools in ESL Classrooms

The use of digital tools and technology in ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms has greatly changed how language is taught and learned. These tools offer students interactive, engaging, and personalized learning opportunities. Technology allows learners to access various resources, practice skills in real-life contexts, and get immediate feedback, all of which improve the learning experience. Digital tools like language learning apps (e.g., Duolingo, Babbel, and Memrise) provide personalized lessons with fun, game-like features that make learning more enjoyable. These apps focus on building vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, often using examples from native speakers. Multimedia resources like videos, podcasts, and audiobooks also help learners improve their listening and speaking skills by exposing them to different accents and conversational styles. In ESL classrooms, technology promotes collaboration and communication. Tools like Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams enable real-time interaction, even in online settings. These platforms are perfect for group discussions, role-playing, and debates, all of which help students develop their speaking skills. Other platforms, such as Padlet and Flipgrid, encourage students to share their work with peers and provide constructive feedback to one another.

Digital tools also address the limitations of traditional ESL teaching methods. AI-powered platforms like Grammarly and Write & Improve analyze students' writing and give tailored feedback to improve grammar, coherence, and clarity. Speech recognition tools like Google Assistant and iTalki help learners improve their pronunciation and fluency by providing instant corrections. Despite these benefits, there are some challenges. In areas with limited access to technology, students may not have the tools they need to fully participate in digital learning. Differences in digital literacy levels among teachers and students can also affect how effectively these tools are used. Additionally, over-reliance on technology can be a problem if teachers don't carefully select tools that match their teaching goals and students' needs. Research has shown that digital tools can improve language learning outcomes. For

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example, gamified apps have been found to help students remember vocabulary better because they make learning fun and repetitive. Virtual simulations and interactive storytelling also help students build cultural understanding and practical language skills by exposing them to real-world situations.

Thus, digital tools and technology have become essential in modern ESL classrooms. They offer new ways to overcome the challenges of traditional teaching and improve language proficiency. With thoughtful planning and balanced use, these tools can transform ESL education into an engaging, effective, and inclusive learning experience for all students. Moreover, they prepare learners for real-world communication in an increasingly digital world.

Experimental Design

The researcher (author) designed an experimental study to evaluate the impact of digital tools on improving oral communication skills among second-year undergraduate students in Arts and Science. A group of ten students, with varying levels of oral proficiency, was selected through purposive sampling. The goal of the study was to analyse how specific digital tools could enhance key oral communication skills, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and coherence.

Before the intervention, a baseline assessment of the students' oral skills was conducted using a standardized introduction. This involved a three-minute speaking task on a general topic, focusing on fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and coherence. Additionally, a survey was conducted to understand the students' initial attitudes toward using digital tools for language learning. These measures provided a benchmark for later comparisons. The intervention lasted six weeks. During this time, students used a variety of digital tools aimed at improving their oral skills. The tools included Duolingo for vocabulary building and pronunciation, speech-to-text applications for real-time feedback on spoken grammar, and VoiceThread for collaborative speaking projects. Virtual group discussions took place twice a week via Google Meet, where students discussed pre-assigned topics, which helped boost their fluency and confidence. Additionally, students participated in interactive speaking quizzes via Kahoot, offering a fun, gamified way to assess progress.

Students worked in pairs to create presentations using VoiceThread, focusing on clear articulation and collaborative speaking. Independent practice was encouraged daily, with each student dedicating at least 30 minutes to self-directed activities like listening exercises and pronunciation drills. At the end of the six weeks, a post-test was conducted using the same rubric as the pre-test, allowing for a direct comparison of the students' oral communication skills before and after the intervention. A follow-up survey was also administered to gather qualitative insights on the students' learning experiences and their views on the effectiveness of the digital tools. The results from the pre- and post-tests

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indicated significant improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and confidence among the participants. Survey responses revealed that students found tools like VoiceThread and Duolingo particularly effective, although some challenges arose, such as occasional technical issues and varying levels of digital literacy among students.

The findings of the study suggest that digital tools have strong potential to enhance oral communication skills in tertiary classrooms, provided there is adequate support and resources available. The experiment demonstrated that technology can be a valuable complement to traditional language teaching methods, fostering greater engagement and improving learning outcomes.

Materials and Tools

Digital Tools:

> ➤ Duolingo for vocabulary and pronunciation.
> ➤ Google Meet/Zoom for virtual speaking sessions.
> ➤ VoiceThread for collaborative oral presentations.
> ➤ Kahoot for interactive speaking quizzes
> ➤ Grammarly and speech-to-text apps for feedback on spoken grammar and coherence.

Tabular Representation of Scores: Pre- and Post-Training with Digital Tools

Student	Pre-Training Score (out of 50)	Post-Training Score (out of 50)	Difference	Percentage Increase (%)
1	30	40	10	33.33
2	28	39	11	39.29
3	25	36	11	44
4	32	45	13	40.63
5	35	48	13	37.14
6	22	35	13	59.09
7	27	38	11	40.74
8	31	44	13	41.94
9	24	37	13	54.17
10	29	42	13	44.83

Analysis of Results

The scores before and after using digital tools in language training show a significant improvement in the participants' oral communication skills. The average score before the training was 28.3, while the post-training average score rose to 40.9, indicating an overall

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improvement of 44.46%. Students with lower initial scores, like Student 6 and Student 9, made remarkable progress with improvements of over 50%. This highlights how digital tools can help bridge learning gaps, especially for students who are less proficient. Even students who were already performing well, like Student 5 and Student 8, showed substantial growth, suggesting that digital tools benefit students across different proficiency levels. This data indicates that digital tools can greatly improve learners' oral communication skills, particularly in areas such as fluency, pronunciation, and confidence.

However, despite the advantages, there are several limitations to using digital tools and technology in ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms that both educators and learners must address. One of the main challenges is unequal access to technology. In many rural or underprivileged areas, schools lack the infrastructure needed for effective digital learning. This includes things like computers, reliable internet connections, and advanced digital tools. As a result, students in these areas are unable to take full advantage of technology-driven language learning, which contributes to educational inequalities.

Technical issues are another significant challenge. Problems such as software glitches, hardware malfunctions, or poor internet connectivity can disrupt the learning process. These interruptions often cause frustration for both students and teachers, which reduces the overall effectiveness of the tools. In addition, many ESL teachers are not adequately trained to incorporate digital tools into their teaching methods. Technology offers many benefits, but using it effectively requires both technical skills and an understanding of how to align these tools with language learning objectives. Without proper training, the full potential of digital tools cannot be realized. Another problem is the over-reliance on digital tools, which can sometimes undermine traditional teaching methods. While technology can aid language acquisition, it cannot replace important aspects of teaching such as face-to-face interaction and personalized guidance. Relying too heavily on technology may also hinder the development of critical thinking, creativity, and interpersonal communication skills in students.

Furthermore, many digital tools provide content that is too generalized and may not meet the specific needs of ESL learners. For example, many apps and platforms offer standard lessons that do not consider regional accents, colloquial language, or vocabulary that may be important for students learning English in different cultural contexts. This lack of cultural and linguistic relevance can make the learning experience less effective. While digital tools are designed to be interactive, not all students find them engaging. Some learners may struggle with self-motivation when using self-paced tools, leading them to skip lessons or complete them inadequately, which prevents them from improving their language skills effectively. Additionally, privacy and data security concerns arise with the use of online

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platforms and apps. If proper safeguards are not in place, student data may be at risk of misuse, creating ethical and legal challenges.

Another limitation is the cost of many advanced digital tools and platforms. Some tools require subscriptions or licenses, making them unavailable to students or institutions that cannot afford them. Even when free versions are offered, they often have limited features, reducing their effectiveness in language learning. Moreover, technology-mediated learning often reduces face-to-face interaction, which is essential for building language skills. Verbal and non-verbal cues, cultural nuances, and instant feedback are difficult to replicate through digital tools, which makes it harder for students to fully engage with the language. Thus, both teachers and students may resist the use of technology in the classroom. Teachers may be unfamiliar with digital tools or feel uncomfortable changing their traditional teaching methods. Students, too, may be reluctant to embrace technology due to a lack of experience or fear of using new tools. This resistance can slow the adoption of technology and prevent it from being used effectively in ESL classrooms.

A balanced approach is needed with schools and policymakers investing in infrastructure, teacher training, and affordable digital solutions. At the same time, it's important to ensure that technology complements, rather than replaces, traditional teaching methods. By recognizing and tackling these challenges, the ESL classroom can fully leverage the potential of digital tools, creating a more engaging and effective learning experience for students.

Conclusion

To address the limitations of technology and digital tools in ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms, a comprehensive approach that combines resources, training, and innovative teaching methods is essential. The first step in overcoming the digital divide is making technology accessible to all students, especially in underprivileged and rural areas. This can be achieved by investing in infrastructure such as affordable devices, reliable internet connectivity, and well-equipped digital labs. Governments and educational institutions must work together to ensure equal access to technology, so that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have the opportunity to benefit from digital learning. Another key area for improvement is teacher preparedness. Educators need continuous professional development to enhance their technical skills and understanding of how to use digital tools effectively in language teaching. Offering workshops and certifications on integrating digital tools into ESL lessons will help teachers align technology with language learning objectives and tailor resources to meet the diverse needs of their students. By empowering teachers with the right training, we can ensure that technology is used as a valuable resource rather than a source of confusion or frustration.

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To avoid over-reliance on technology, a hybrid teaching model should be adopted, combining digital tools with traditional teaching methods. This approach can maintain a balance between technological innovation and personalized instruction. Face-to-face interactions, group activities, and discussions are crucial elements of language learning that can complement digital tools, ensuring that students still experience the human connection necessary for effective communication skills. Customizing content to meet the specific needs of learners is another critical factor in improving ESL education. Developers of digital tools must collaborate with educators to create content that reflects the regional, cultural, and linguistic diversity of students. This means addressing local accents, dialects, and cultural nuances that are often overlooked in generic language learning platforms. Open-source platforms can also play an important role in providing tailored materials at low or no cost, making content customization more accessible for teachers and learners.

Engaging students is key to maintaining motivation, especially when using digital platforms. Incorporating elements of gamification, storytelling, and real-world applications can make learning more interactive and enjoyable. Features such as adaptive learning paths and progress tracking can help students stay on track with their language goals, while also allowing them to take responsibility for their learning. Educators can also create an environment that encourages curiosity and exploration, making language learning more meaningful and fun. Overcoming resistance to technology adoption is another important challenge. Some educators and students may be hesitant to use digital tools, either due to unfamiliarity or fear of disrupting traditional learning methods. To address this, awareness campaigns should be conducted to showcase the benefits of digital tools in enhancing language skills. Highlighting success stories and sharing examples of pilot projects that have positively impacted language learning can motivate educators and learners to embrace technology. Financial barriers are another obstacle to integrating digital tools in ESL classrooms. Many institutions, especially those in lower-income areas, cannot afford to invest in advanced technology. To address this, open-access educational resources can be leveraged to provide quality learning materials at no cost. In addition, partnerships with ed-tech companies and government funding can help reduce the financial burden on institutions and students, making it easier to implement digital tools in classrooms.

Overcoming these limitations requires a collaborative effort from all stakeholders—educators, learners, policymakers, and technology developers. By promoting inclusivity, fostering innovation, and embracing adaptability, ESL classrooms can harness the full potential of digital tools to create an engaging, effective, and equitable learning environment for all students. This approach will not only improve language acquisition but also provide students with the skills they need to thrive in a globalized world.

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