

## **“The Internet” -- Computer-Mediated Communication for English Language Learners and Teachers**

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**Abstract**

This research paper at the outset seeks with an aim to address the major contribution accomplished by Internet, which is the latest trendy of “technological wonders”. This paper neatly investigates that the “internet” is an essential desiderata stupendous network for computer mediated communication for English language learners and teachers. It further discusses the vital role of Internet, which provides and improves the new ideas and latest strategies for English learners and teachers to develop and build up their globalized rational thinking. It sum up with a truthful fact that technological evolution like Internet is an impetus stimulator for potential innovation in the field of English Communication and Education.

**Keywords:** Internet, technological, wonders, computer, communication, English learners, teachers, strategies, ideas.

There is no denying the fact that India is a growing country where computers are now-a-days found to be “technological marvels” which have been dominating the technological scenario since the 1970’s, not only by winning over the hearts of billions but also entering into all walks of life. Computers can not only make us efficient but also productive at work at all levels possible so as to raise living standards and also to stay connected to the world far and wide. The latest trends in computerization include Internet, Pentium-based systems and Artificial Intelligence. A computer, as it is generally held, cannot be defeated by man in a game of chess. The irony is that the computer is nothing but an effective product of human brain itself.

One cannot imagine any area in which computerization has not been done, for all vital and potential fields like business, banking, electronic publishing, Engineering design, International Communication through E-mail, creative designing, fashion designing, 'Internet Surfing, web page designing, electronic media etc., are said to have rather evidently witnessed the extensive usage of computers. Japan, the USA, the UK, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Taiwan, Germany and France have been using extensively in the fields of automobiles, automation, business transactions, health management, technical education and technological communication. These are considered the super powers of the globe Falling in line with these super powers, if India wants to emulate them on economic, technological and social fronts, complete computerization and its linkage with Internet coupled with international information superhighway seems to be 'a must'. This becomes possible only with the help of computers and Internet Networks, and for communicative technology, Computer-linked Internet Network seems to be very essential and imperative.

The 'Internet' seems to have some important implications for linguistics or language learning too. One can easily understand and even explore how far the Internet exerts potential impact on today's learning and teaching of English Electronic mail is basically a way to provide exchange of messages between any two computers, no matter where they are located in the world. The E-mail has a very versatile nature and can be used to send messages to a particular person, to a group of individuals, to a predefined list of users, to send text files to send binary objects (i.e. Programs, graphics, spread-sheets, audio and video clippings), to distribute electronic magazines, to broadcast announcements and get alarm messages from monitoring programs. E-mail can be used to retrieve files query databases in remote computers. Used as a postal system, it is one of the most frequently used day-to-day facilities offered by the 'Internet'. What is Internet?

Everybody talks about the Internet now-a-days, but most people don't really know, what actually it is. Briefly speaking, "Internet is a web which has a very large number of computers connected to each other" (81). These computers are connected with one and the another either through wire or satellite, microwaves or fibre optic cables. They are so programmed using many software browsers, such as Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator that one can communicate from one computer to another computer within minutes. No one can 'own' the Internet service; No one can even really run it, and no one can turn it off or on. In other words, 'Internet' is essentially a big network that links small networks and individual computers all over the world using modems, phone lines and satellite links. Everyone is welcome in the arms of internet as long as one's computer runs the communication protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/ IP). This universal standard allows different types of computers to communicate to each other.

Computer - mediated - Communication - (CMC) is considered to be one of the important features of globalization and as a result, the "Internet' has become an important linguistic medium exerting a tremendous influence and impact on each and every aspect of human life including the learning of languages. McLuhan even coined the term 'global village' in the 1960's of the last century so as to bring home the point that electronic communication would unite the world, for "the medium is the message". Warschauer and Healey too remarked thus:

“It is the rise of computer-mediated communication and the Internet, more than anything else, which has reshaped the uses of computers for language learning at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (P 63).

With the advent of the Internet, the computer – both in society and in the classroom, has been transformed from a tool for information processing and display to a tool for information processing and potential communication. In the words of S.C. Gupta,

“Internet is like an act, that of a magician  
The miracle that Internet had made to happen  
is really mind boggling ones. We can find everything  
on Internet that has put the world knowledge in  
a computer box” (P 81).

The Internet works in such a wonderful manner that even if one or the other phone lines are busy, or a number of individual networks go down, data packets would find another route through different lines, networks and computers to reach the final destination. With the help of Internet, language learners can easily communicate rather in expensively and even quickly with other learners or speakers of the target language all over the world. The Internet has also an imperative effect or impact on the lexical, phonetic, syntactic standards of language and that is why language teachers put a great emphasis on the use of ‘correct’ language. The ‘Internet’ provides such essential services as E-mail, FTP (File Transfer Protocol), Gopher, Telnet, which refers to remote Login, Usenet, Wais (Wide Area Information Server) and www (World wide web). Generally speaking, English is the universal language on the Internet.

In different countries and cultures, English has different positions. There are countries where English is the native language of the majority, there are countries where English is a widely known second language and there are countries where English has no special position. Whatever be the causes or reasons, English is often found to be an official language and the common language of educated people; globally, English is necessary for living on the Internet and the more languages one has to learn well, the less time and energy one will have for learning, other things. One of the most interesting aspects of the ‘Internet’ is the incredible amount of diversity one can find there. Anyone with access to the Internet can make a contribution through the process of uploading. This occurs when one takes files from one’s computer where users can access them from the ‘Internet’.

English is an eclectic language which tends to borrow words from other languages instead of constructing words for new concepts from older words with derivation or word composition. It is often said that English has a rich vocabulary as if it were something to be proud of. The richness of the vocabulary results basically from one word borrowing and implies that words for related concepts are typically not related to each other in any obvious, regular manner. Word borrowing

makes a language more international in one sense. Access to Internet is empowering in giving access to uncensored material of enormous variety. Access to almost instant communication with individuals and persons using the Internet can adopt new and persons using the Internet can adopt new persona and make persons somewhat unique in approaches.

After the establishment of the Internet by the military in the USA, it was the universities that first took advantage of the web. To this day, academic users of the web (mostly on 'edu' and ac servers) are especially privileged. They have unusually free access to the Internet. Special Interest Groups (SIG's) enable teachers with similar interest to share ideas and make contacts worldwide through newsletters, symposia and other activities. For example, the IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) hosts several such groups as ESP, Literature and Cultural Studies, Pronunciation, Research and Testing. Likewise, TESOL hosts several Internet sections and Affiliations which offer networking with English teachers worldwide with a view to exchange ideas for more efficient and effective teaching. Any Internet user can acquire membership in up to three internet groups. The Internet user may familiarize himself/herself with a large number of English Department worldwide. For example, by checking the Internet Resources for English Teachers, one can find the site of the Amherst English Department and make use of its rich material on the teaching of Literature and composition. With the help of the use of Internet, teachers of English can find a wealth of materials to help with lesson preparation, professional development and the integration of technology based learning tools into the curriculum. Such sites enable teachers to discover new ideas and strategies to improve teaching and learning in their classrooms. List of resources include projects, reports and even job openings. English teachers can become global and go global, in other words, have global reach to the twenty-first century by subscribing to E-mail/ mailing lists of interest to EFL/ESL.

To conclude, the 'Internet' makes available hundreds of online dictionaries and encyclopedias and the Internet Dictionary Project at [http:// www. June 29.com/IDP](http://www.June29.com/IDP) allows users to do online searches of several dictionaries and to translate English words into other languages or vice-versa. Effective cross-cultural communication and collaboration, including making effective use of information found in online networks, necessitate a high degree of critical interpretation. So, technological advancement like Internet is a strong catalyst for educational innovation and effective communication enhancement both for teachers and language learners.

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