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AWARENESS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AMONGST DEGREE COLLEGE STUDENTS OF CHANDIGARH

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Abstract:

1. The Rationale of the Study

With proliferation of technologies, it has become easier to get access to different methods for teaching and learning. The growing technology has become very important in one's life as people totally rely on this advanced technology and cannot do without it. In present times, it has become a necessity as it is ubiquitous and has entered into man's daily life.

KEYWORDS:

Communication , Technology A , Multi-lingual , Various Software , Teaching .

INTRODUCTION:

India is a multi-lingual state where a second language like English needs an effective way in teaching and learning. Information and Communication Technology helps in the acquisition of a second language. The investigator endeavours to find an awareness of Information and Communication Technology amongst degree college students in Chandigarh since it is modern as well as advanced city and it is highly equipped with this growing technology in comparison to Ambala district. There are many institutes in Chandigarh that teach students by using advanced technology. The growing technology enables the investigator to view the issues in the use of Information and Communication Technology in English language teaching. All depends upon different types of resources available in the classroom. Due to the paucity of technology, teachers and students cannot achieve desired goals in second language teaching and learning. People welcome this new technology as it helps in updating them with new information regarding economic, political and social issues. Moreover, they can share their views with other people all over the world. There is no doubt the Information and Communication Technology has changed the way of connectivity among people in the world. David crystal quotes a speech made by the South African president, Thabo Mbeki on, 'On how people should seize the new technology to empower themselves; inform about the truth of their own economic, political and cultural circumstances; and to give themselves a voice that the entire world could hear.' (Crystal 2002: 7)

In addition to this Internet has emerged as a dynamic power and proved as one of the most innovative inventions that man has ever produced. John Naughton fully supports this view, 'The Internet is one of the most remarkable things human beings have ever made...' (Naughton 1999: 21)

2. IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS

Information and Communication Technology comprises different sets of technological tools and resources used for communication and to create, propagate, store and manage information, which is of great significance. Information and Communication Technology includes WWW, Internet, Computers,

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Broadcasting Technology (radio and television) and Telephony. Jitender kumar avers, 'Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) exemplified by the internet and interactive multimedia are obviously of great significance for education. It needs to be effectively integrated into the formal classroom teaching and learning conditions. It is also to be focused in a teacher education program.' (Jitender kumar 2010: 42)

A survey done on the students reveals that if these students are taught through smart classes with highly equipped modern techniques they can overcome the problems of language inabilities, and can acquire good knowledge with regard to the second language acquisition. It is possible for an adult to achieve this degree of mastery of a foreign language, by means of a scientific approach with satisfactorily selected and organized materials, within approximately three months. In that brief time the learning adult will not become a fluent speaker for all occasions but can develop the skills required for acquisition of a language.

3.VARIOUS SOFTWARE USED IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

With regard to the Information and Communication Technology, there is a wide range of software available in language teaching which are as follows:

- a)Connected speech
- b)Video –Voice
- c)Beat the clock
- d)Visual Thesaurus

Following are the implications of the above-mentioned programs used in language teaching:

- a)Connected Speech – This software focuses on the listening as well as speaking skills.
- b)Video –Voice- This software maps the pitch of the speaker and makes it easy to adjust the falling and rising tone.
- c)Beat the clock- This software helps in learning the English language by testing on graded sets or groups of words. This sharpens one's brain and helps in retaining the meaning of those words for extended period of time.
- d)Visual Thesaurus- This visual thesaurus updates the vocabulary of a student. In addition to this, it widens and enhances seeker's roster of words accompanied with explicit information of different parts of speech of language

The use of Information and Communication Technology inculcates communicative competence and brings appropriateness including linguistic competence, which is extremely desirable in learning a language. David Nunan writes, 'Most recently, the term 'communicative competence' has gained currency. This refers to knowledge of rules of use and appropriacy and includes linguistic competence.' (Nunan 1996: 33)

Some of the foreign scholars conducted studies on how the foreign language can be best taught with Information and Communication Technology in language teaching. They concluded that the use of Information and Communication Technology in language teaching is basic orientation that helps in improving teaching methods. A foreign language can be best taught by using it actively in the classroom rather than using analytical procedures that focus on explanation of grammar rules in classroom teaching. Rekha Aslam iterates, 'Learning has been theorized to take place through imitation, memorization, intuition, observation, inheritance and a myriad other processes.' (Aslam 1992: 1). Teachers must encourage direct and spontaneous use of the foreign language. They should invigorate reading and writing skills, learners would be then able to induce grammar rules with ease.

4. WHAT IS THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN DEGREE COLLEGES OF CHANDIGARH?

Following are the three different theoretical views through which students are being taught in their educational institutions:

- (i)Structural view
- (ii)Functional view
- (iii)Interactional view

In Chandigarh, most of the degree colleges teach through structural view. The functional view focuses on the communicative dimension rather than the grammatical characteristics of language. Interactional view is used in very few institutions. The educational institutions using structural view includes grammatical units, phonological units, transformational elements or lexical items and audio-lingual method embodies this view explicitly. In country like India, the atmosphere of the classroom is a crucial factor. In such circumstances, the use of Information and communication technology becomes indispensable.

5. OBJECTIVES

- (i) To study various the resources with respect to Information and Communication Technology in English Language Labs.
- (ii) To study the issues in the use of Information and Communication Technology in learning English

6. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

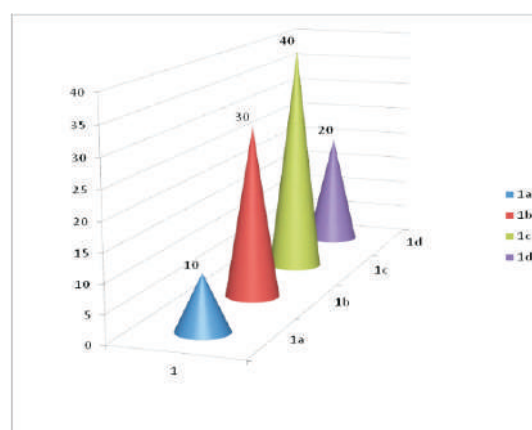
The investigator has delimited the study to PG students of Chandigarh. The researcher endeavours to analyze the present status of Information and Communication Technology in UT like Chandigarh as it comes in the vicinity of Ambala district. Secondly it is highly equipped with advanced technology in comparison to Ambala. Furthermore, it serves as a basis for comparison in her further study. The questionnaire consists of fifteen questions distributed amongst thirty students of different degree colleges of Chandigarh. The responses of these students are received and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

7. RESEARCH TOOL – THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The findings presented in this paper come from a short survey carried out in March 2012 amongst the degree college students in Chandigarh. The investigator wanted to check the awareness of Information and Communication Technology amongst them with two main objectives mentioned above. These objectives aspire to establish a general overview of availability of the resources and awareness of Information and Communication Technology amongst degree college students in Chandigarh. The first aim relates to the availability of the various resources with regard to the Information and Communication Technology used in teaching English as a second language. The second aim mentioned in the objectives relates the issues in the use of Information and Communication Technology in learning English.

Q1. How often do you use computer?

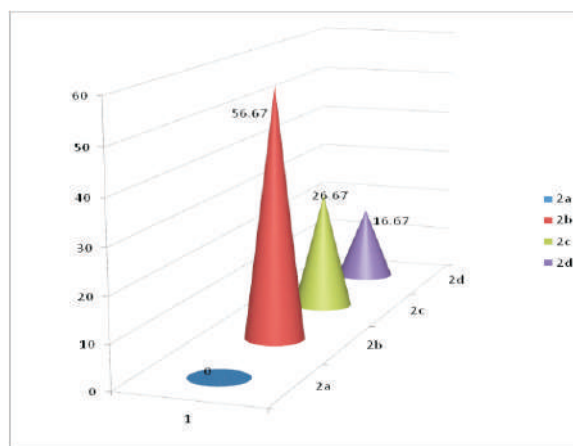
- A) Once a week
- B) Twice in a month
- C) Daily
- D) Do not use



Findings: The 40% respondents claim that they use the computer daily and 30% use it twice in a month and 10% use it once a week whereas 20% do not use it.

Q2. For what purpose do you use computer? Please specify the most appropriate

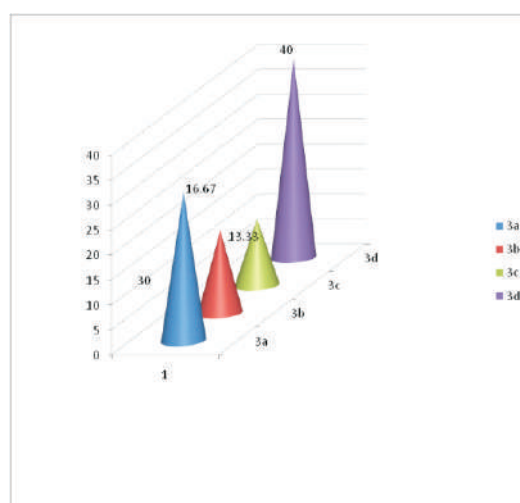
- A) Games
- B) Internet (chatting or surfing)
- C) Use as a library
- D) study for presentation or project



Findings: This shows that 56.67% use it for chatting and surfing. Only 26.67% use it for library purpose and 16.67% use it for their presentation and projects.

Q3. Do you attend computer classes in your institute? If yes, for how many days do you attend the classes?

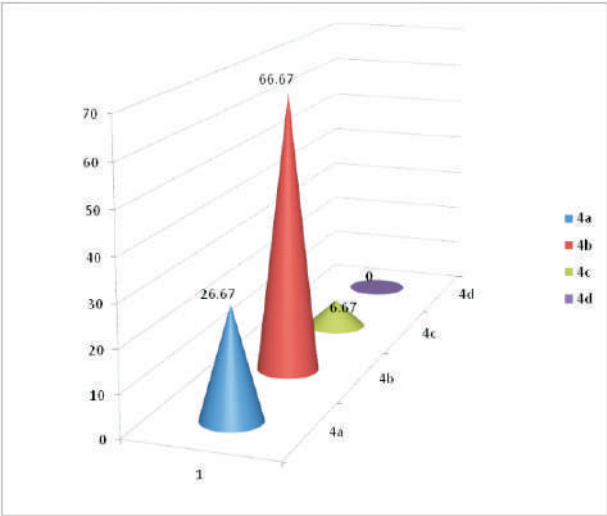
- A) Once a week
- B) twice a week
- C) Often
- D) Do not attend



Findings: 30% students claim that they attend their computer classes only once a week and 16.67% attend only twice a week. 13.33% attend very often whereas 40% students do not attend their computer classes in their institutes.

Q4. Does your institute have fully equipped English language lab. Yes / No. In your opinion how important, it is for an institute to have such language labs. Please specify the most appropriate.

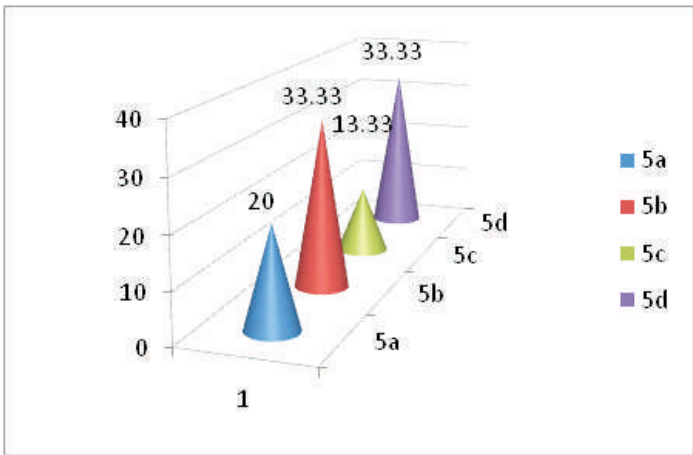
- A) Important
- B) Very important
- C) Not important
- D) Somewhat important



Findings: 66.67% responses suggest that it is 'Very Important' to have fully equipped English language labs. 26.67% selected only 'Important' whereas 6.67% choose 'Not Important'

Q5. How many times do you visit your English language lab?

- A) Once a week
- B) Twice a week
- C) Daily
- D) Do not have lab

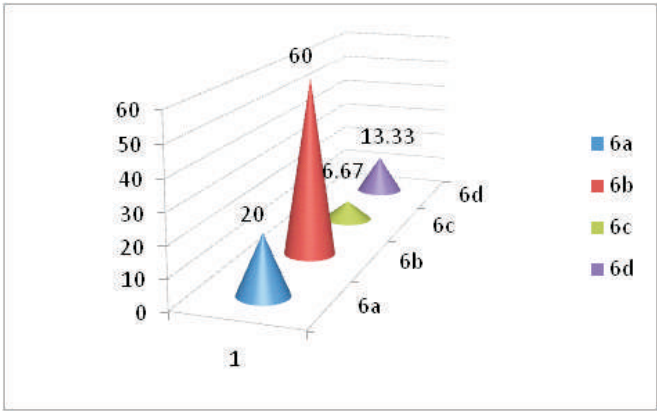


Findings 20% of the students visit only once a week and 33.33% visit their language lab only twice a week. Whereas 13.33% visit daily and 33.33% do not have language labs.

Q6. How important do you think is to teach English through ICT?

- A) Important

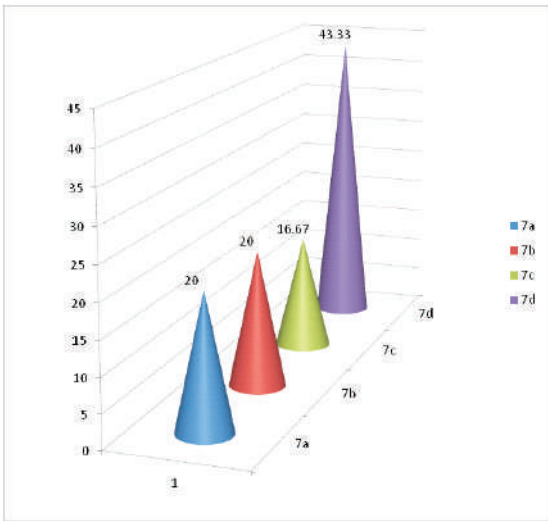
- B) Very important
 C) Not important
 D) Somewhat important



Findings: 60% students think that it is 'Very important' to teach English through ICT and 20% chooses 'Important'. However, 6.67% choose 'Not Important' whereas 13.33% students selected 'Somewhat Important'.

Q7. Are you being taught English in your classroom through Information and communication technology? If yes, please specify how often you are being taught.

- A) Once a week
 B) Twice a week
 C) Daily
 D) Do not have ICT facility

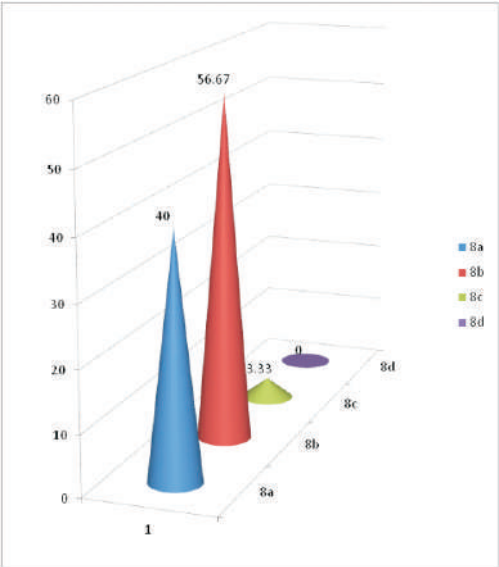


Findings: 20% says that they are being taught English through ICT only once a week and 20% are taught twice a week. 16.67% are taught daily whereas 43.33% do not have access to it.

Q8. In your opinion how important are software for language teaching such as Connected Speech, Video Voice or Study Skill Success?

- A) Important
 B) Very important

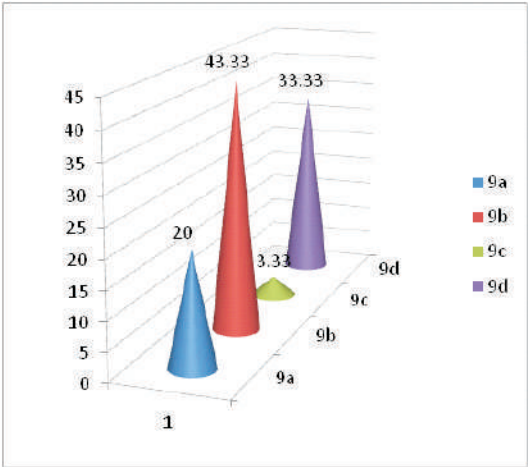
- C) Not important
- D) Somewhat important



Findings: 40% think that the software like connected speech, video voice or study skill success are 'Important' for language teaching and 56.67% think it to be 'Very Important' whereas 3.33% think it is 'Not Important'

Q9. How often do you use in your studies, software like Text Editor.

- A) Once a week
- B) twice a week
- C) Daily
- D) Do not use

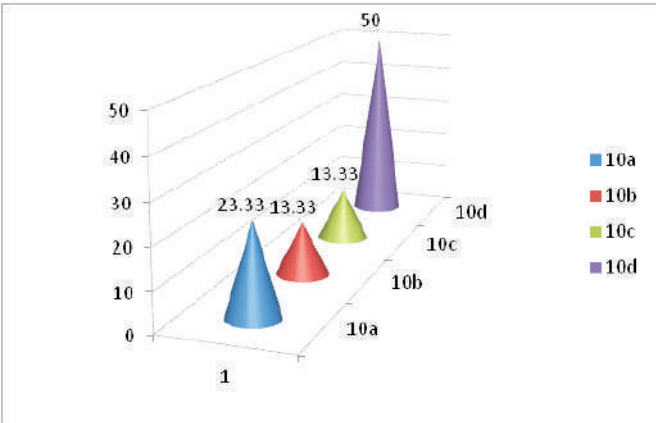


Findings: 20% use software like text editor in their studies only once a week and 43.33% use it twice a week. Only 3.33% use it daily whereas 33.33% do not use it.

Q10. Are you aware of E-books or digital books? Yes/no How often do you use?

- A) Once a week
- B) Daily
- C) Once in a month

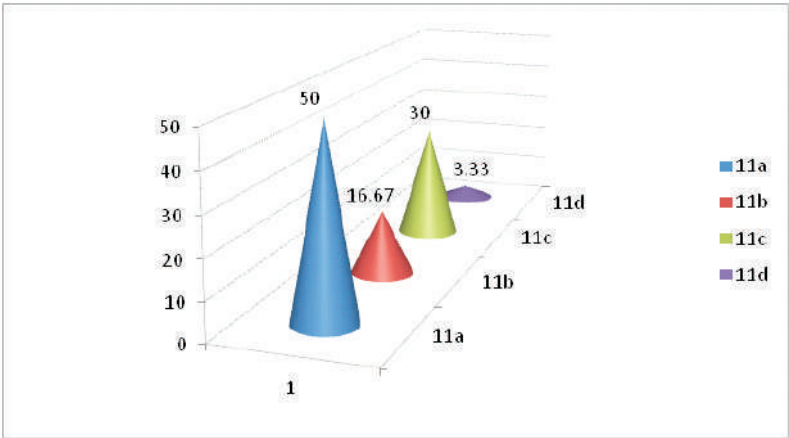
D) do not have access and facility..



Findings: 23.33% of the respondents use it only once a week. 13.33% use it once a month and 13.33% use it daily. Whereas 50% of the respondents neither have access nor have facility of E-books.

Q11. Do you agree that playing games can help in improving ones' linguistics skills?

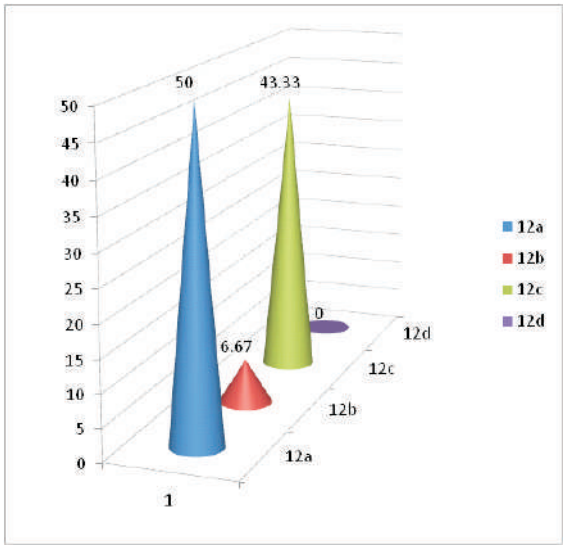
- A) Agree
- B) Disagree
- C) Partially agree
- D) Strongly disagree



Findings: 50% of the respondents agree with the above asked question and 16.67% disagree. 30% are partially agree and only 3% are strongly disagree.

Q12. Do you agree that ICT aided lessons are better than classroom lectures?

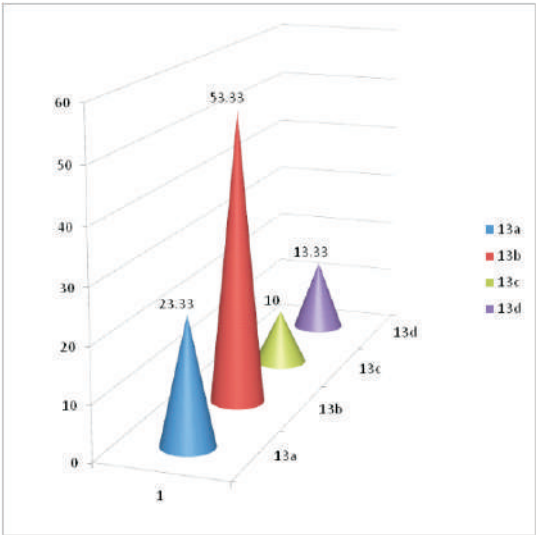
- A) Agree
- B) Disagree
- C) Partially agree
- D) Strongly disagree



Findings: 50% prefer ICT aided lessons better than classroom lectures for teaching English and 6.67% students disagree with the raised question. Whereas 43.33% are partially agree.

Q13. In your opinion, how appropriate is the available English teaching material for your class? Select the option you most agree with.

- A) Very appropriate
- B) Appropriate
- C) Neither appropriate nor inappropriate
- D) Inappropriate

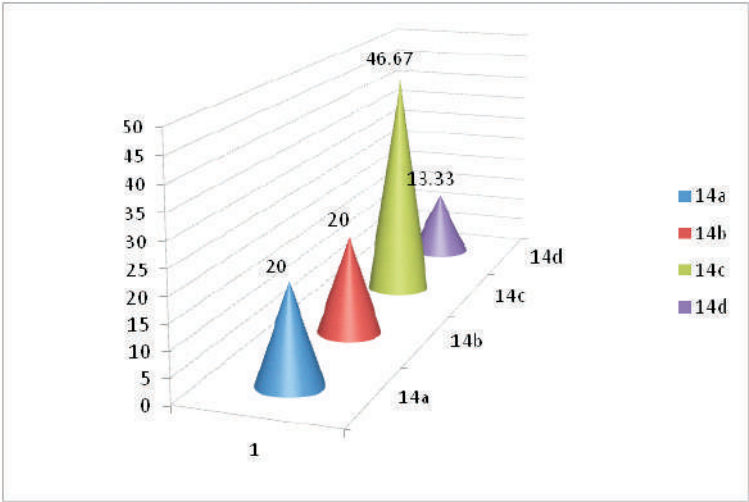


Findings: 53.33% claim that the available teaching material is 'Appropriate' and 23.33% selected 'Very appropriate'. 13.33% claim that the available teaching material is 'Inappropriate' whereas 10% select the option of 'Neither Appropriate nor Inappropriate'

Q14. In your opinion which of the following methods will be very effective to teach English Pronunciation?

Very effective effective

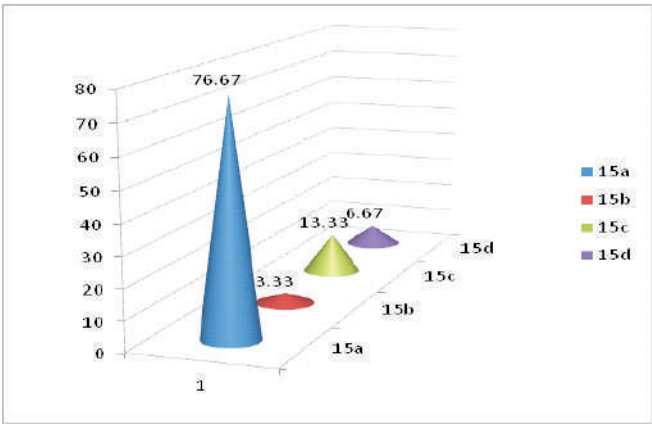
CDs available in the market on spoken English		
Pronouncing dictionaries		
A teacher who is Non native speaker of English but proficient in pronunciation and teaches through ICT		
On line classes for pronunciation		



Findings: 46.67% selected the teacher who is non -native speaker of English but proficient in English and teaches through ICT the most effective method for teaching pronunciation. 20% selected CDs available in the market and 20% selected pronouncing dictionaries. Whereas 13.33% selected on-line classes for pronunciation.

Q15. Do you agree that communication technology has helped the world in coming closer and working together through English as a medium of communication?

- A) Agree
- B) Disagree
- C) partially agree
- D) strongly disagree



Findings: 76.67% agree with the above- mentioned question and 3.33% disagree with the same. 13.33% are partially agree and 6.67% are strongly disagree.

8. CONCLUSION

The investigator has concluded this paper in terms of the two main objectives mentioned above.

Objective1: To study the various resources with regard to Information and Communication Technology in English Language Lab

This study reveals that most of the respondents show awareness of Information and Communication Technology amongst them. They use it for chatting and surfing and very few of them use it for presentation and library purpose. Most of them have not seen the English language labs and considered it to be very important. The students, who have the facility of language lab, are not satisfied with it as they visit it rarely and do not have appropriate teaching material. They prefer the teacher who is proficient in pronunciation and teaches through Information and Communication Technology.

Objective2: To study the issues in the use of Information and Communication Technology in learning English

Following are the various issues in the use of Information and Communication Technology in learning English:

- 2.1 Does it help in improving the linguistic skills?
- 2.2 Is it better to study through Information and Communication Technology than classroom lecture?
- 2.3 Do the students have access to Information and Communication Technology?

The respondents considered that Information and Communication Technology is very important in improving one's linguistic skills. They gave a sanguine feedback to Information and Communication Technology in comparison to classroom lecture. Having brought the present project to its conclusion, the researcher realizes many more objectives could have been accomplished from this survey had it not faced the constraints of time. Therefore the researcher leaves an open- ended conclusion for her next investigation. The present research will therefore, prove to be successful and meaningful only if the researcher gets the answers to the above raised issues.

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