

## HUMAN SKILLS VERSUS MACHINE POWER

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### ABSTRACT

The field of language education provides ample opportunities to have exposure to different approaches and methods of conventional classroom teaching. The use of such materials in classroom teaching is intended to give learners of foreign language entry to information, knowledge-sharing, energize interplay of communication, and magnify scholarship. Nonetheless technology has altered life to such an extent that in all spheres of life particularly education there is a paradigm shift, and the old age classroom looks very different than it was some centuries ago. The chalkboards used in conventional teaching have been put back by digital whiteboards. Consequently, the teacher's sacred role of teaching is challenged, and teachers are encountering enormous problems. So, the focus in the article is on general attitude to the truth that human power cannot be replaced by machine power.

**Keywords:** Language, Education, Traditional, Teaching, ICT, Challenges, Human Skills, Machine Power.

### INTRODUCTION

Homo Sapiens are unmatched and amazing creation of the 'supreme being'. Among all the living species, only humans are entitled with the gift of communication. Other living species like animals are deprived of speaking abilities though they can perform almost all activities on par with human beings. Nonetheless, human being is the only living organism in this expansive universe to possess the skills of communication. Animals do communicate using 'semiotics' and not language.

I cannot doubt that language owes its origin to the imitation  
and modification, aided by signs and gestures,  
of various natural sounds, the voices of other animals,  
and man's own instinctive cries.

*(Charles Darwin, 1871. The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex).*

### ICT'S IMPERIALISM ON HUMAN LIFE AND EDUCATION

The beginnings of logic and reason emphasized by science, ushered in new modes of communication between people and led hitherto innocent and ignorant human beings to make inquiries about the very existence of religion and other aspects of life. Thus, logic and reason came to occupy an elevated position creating disasters and playing havoc in human life. This aggravated great avenues to the beginnings of globalization which in turn opened new vistas for the rise of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). According to Håkansson Lindqvist:

educational policies often emphasize the potential

of digital technology to reform or even transform teaching and learning practices in school contexts. However, research also reports that the use of digital technology in school does not seem to have had the positive impact on teaching and learning ..... frameworks concerned with digital technology in education is interpreted, transformed, and enacted (Almerich et al. 2016).

### **HUMAN SKILLS REPLACED by MACHINE POWER**

Digital teaching has been in the spotlight from the recent times. The entrance of this incredible digitalization became rampant in the very lifestyle and living standards of people. The electronic age sphere headed the use of electronic gadgets in all areas of life. The natural way of living ceased, and people too began to grope for new techniques and modes of lifestyle to make their living more congenial and quicker to suit the needs of changing/emerging trends and technologies. The use of technology by human beings is so tremendous that manpower is losing ground and machine power is taking the dominion status. The creative, authentic, innate talents and potentialities owned by human beings has become artificial and exaggerated thus making human beings and their natural instincts 'slaves of machines'.

The changes in globalization affected standards of living and changed the entire system of education across the globe. Automatically the accustomed, time-honored/old-fashioned mode of teaching had to make a move terribly and educational institutions, schools and colleges notified the immediate implementation of technology use in the classroom teaching mandatory. The question is to what extent technology can be a useful, efficient, and meaningful tool in imparting education to the students. The definite answer cannot be given because teachers like me are in a haze. They are panicked because of the intervention of ICT tools in the classroom. Teachers believe that the sudden onslaught of using technology in the classroom is like a bolt from the blue because most of them are not strangers to the use of electronic gadgets.

With the onset and proliferation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), there is a growing demand that it be included in school education. It has become more of a fashion statement to have computers or multimedia in schools, the result being that in spite of its potential to make learning liberating, its implementation is often not more than cosmetic. .... Teacher education needs to orient and sensitize the teacher to distinguish between critically useful, developmentally appropriate and the detrimental use of ICT.  
(National Curriculum Framework on Teacher Education, 2010).

### **INSTRUCTORS AS 'GENERATORS OF KNOWLEDGE'**

Teaching is a noble profession, and the teachers are 'generators of knowledge'. Real teaching can take place only in the classroom through live interaction between students and teachers. The conventional teaching calls for a disciplined imparting of lessons on the part of educators. Teaching in the classroom brings about full contentment to both teachers and learners. It is a fine platform to encounter the students personally and physically. Taking into consideration the size and strength of

the classroom, the teacher can access every student while teaching. Proper use of body language such as eye contact and facial expressions by the teacher will arouse the students' interests and motivation. A-feel-at-home ambience will also be created to the students in the physical classrooms and every student is comfortable to listen to their teachers. They will never feel like fish out of water. This personal care, concern and observation will be missing in the online mode. The reason being ICT tools will be fore grounded and the physical presence of the students will not be emphasized. So, there are chances of less assurance to listen honestly in the digital classroom. Hence, one can be rest assured that human power is more susceptible to any changes and even to operate machines, human power and assistance is important. The truth is that machine power (ICT) tools can never play its part in giving the learners a 'feel' and 'flavor', and 'function' as real teachers do. The emotions of the students cannot be judged by machines. Teachers as educators and facilitators face heavy loss of being happy and satisfied about their teaching and face lot of problems in online teaching.

### **DIFFICULTIES FACED BY TEACHERS IN ONLINE TEACHING**

There are many difficulties to substantiate the truth that human power (traditional teaching) is more meaningful than machine power (online teaching). Some of the barriers and challenges of traditional and online teaching are:

1.**Multiculturalism**-This factor plays a key role in traditional classroom teaching. Students come from varied multi-ethnic and multi-lingual back grounds and in such a setting, the knowledge and perception levels of learner's maybe different from one another. There are chances for students to be cantankerous because of the different linguistic, cultural, religion and community groups. In the traditional classroom, the teachers have the responsibility to take care of what is happening before them in the classes while teaching or even outside the class. Accordingly, they can control the students, caution them to be good, personally counsel the aggressive ones and save the class from any kind of misunderstanding and fights among the students. This aspect of identifying the linguistic, ethnic and other barriers in the virtual mode is highly impossible and even if happens, there is no one to monitor the mischief of the students in the online mode.

2.**Real Learning of Subject**-The traditional teaching calls for a lot of authentic learning on the part of the students and authentic teaching on the part of the teachers. The teachers prepare intensively with a view of sharing their knowledge with the learners. To attain this end, teachers take extra pain to make the students comprehend the topics by repeating or emphasizing a particular point. If need be, the teacher also gives some live demonstrations physically to make learning meaningful and useful. But such a physical participation of the teacher is certainly missing in the online mode and hence teaching becomes monotonous and stereotyped. So traditional teaching is more subject-oriented and knowledge -assured than digital teaching.

3.**Written and other Exercises**- In the traditional teaching, teachers have the scope to give some exercises to the students and make them do the task spontaneously. Through rote learning and drilling methods, teachers can assign various tasks with a view to ensure mastery of the subject orally and in written form. But such an exercise is missing in the online mode and even though it is plausible, the teachers will have to think twice because there are chances of students copying from some source because there is no one to observe them physically.

4. **Listening Ability is Tested**-In the traditional classroom teaching; teachers have the feasibility and accessibility to discover whether the students are listening or not. By chance if students are identified

by the teachers to be reckless behavior on the part of students and don't pay attention to listening, they can punish the students to ensure that mistakes are not committed by the learners in future again. In the digital platform, such an identification whether the students are listening or not is lacking and difficult for them to gauge. The technology is so flexible that students can login as per the instructions given and pretend to stay in the platform and listen because the screen will display that they are present though they may be engaged in doing other activities at the same time. So, it becomes difficult for teachers to constantly call the students to find out if they are listening or not.

**5. Cost-effective Activity-** The Old-fashioned sway of teaching has nothing to do with money or expenditure aspects, but teaching through ICT tools is a costly affair and the expenses will have to be borne by the teachers. Though some institutions are providing electronic gadgets like laptops, tabs and mobile phones, yet the financial concern of their maintenance has to be met by the teachers which is very difficult. Those teachers who are economically weak find it very hard to afford huge amounts to recharge their phones and foot the network bills which are highly expensive.

**6. Network Problems-** Network issues like lack of signals, poor broadband bandwidth, problems with electricity and lack of connectivity because of changes in the ecological system creates hectic problems for the teachers. Even though the teachers may be sincere and honest in their teaching through online mode, nonetheless, if there are no proper signals available, then the teachers will have to bear the brunt of being reckless, insincere, and irresponsible. No one is ready to listen to the problems/barriers faced by them. These practical difficulties encountered by the teachers may not appeal to the authorities of the respective institutions if they try to elucidate the issue in an honest manner. But no such problems will arise in the conventional mode of teaching and the teachers can happily go about with their regular classes.

Human Skills/power cannot 'supplement' or 'complement' teachers and their roles as it still holds relevance. True and genuine teaching can be achieved only if traditional teaching takes place and the availability of manpower in the form of teachers in the classroom. With their iron will, mental grit and positive attitude towards teaching, teachers can become friendly and more responsible in the traditional mode to make the learning process more exciting, different, enriching and viable to individual prejudices in the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

Human Skills (Traditional Teaching) shows the learners a different world altogether and helps them to contemplate solemnly on their studies while machine power (online teaching) is taken for granted and makes the students just robots and machines without allowing them to behave as 'thinking things'. We firmly believe in the fact that human power cannot be replaced by machine power and traditional teaching is the only best channel to transmit knowledge and information to students in the classroom than machine power or online teaching.

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