



MODERN AND EMERGING TRENDS IN ELT

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ABSTRACT

English as a global language enables people to keep in touch, do business and/or travel in the modern globalized world. Thus, teaching and learning English is of critical importance. The trends in ELT have been gaining tremendous significance in education systems. It has undergone numerous changes and innovations. There are various crucial factors combined together causing damage to current affairs of the teaching of English. A few may be taken as decline of methods, growing emphasis on bottom-up and top-down skills, creation of new knowledge about English, integrated and contextualized teaching of multiple language skills, and many such others.

Every type of language teaching has its own technologies. The grammar-translation method allows the teacher to explain grammatical rules and students to perform translations. Teachers following this method rely on the blackboard as a perfect vehicle for the one-way transmission of information. This teaching aid is later on being supplemented, if not entirely replaced, by the overhead projector and computer software programs consisting of grammatical exercises - another excellent aid for teacher-dominated classroom. On the contrary, the audio-lingual method in which teachers integrate technology into their classroom and build the confidence to learn, allows students to learn best through constant repetition in the target language in labs. Audio-tape is the perfect aid for those following this method. However, this method is regarded as expensive. With the passage of time, laptops, computers, interactive whiteboards and broadband internet are becoming cheaper and more easily available to introduce them into classrooms. Another drawback of it is that it focuses only on language form and ignores communicative excellence. Besides, computer and technology with latest advances applicable to language teaching still produce uncertainty and anxiety for many teachers without appropriate training.

The English Language Teaching pedagogies focusing on developing learners' communicative competence and autonomy in language classrooms have two key concepts of the learner-centered classrooms: placing more responsibility in the hands of the students to manage their



own learning, and providing teachers with the role as facilitators of knowledge to help learners learn.

Language is a part of society. It is not an isolated phenomenon. It involves the physical, mental, emotional, moral, and social development of the individual. At individual level, learning a language can be effective only if it best matches learners' needs and interests. To promote optimal development of second language competence, it demands to be kept in account 'what content to be taught, how much and to whom'. At societal level, historical and cultural settings are seen to be linking the nature of language. There is a relationship between linguistics and other fields of study. It is related to other aspects of society, behavior and experience through the development of a theory, such as in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, philosophical linguistics, biological linguistics, and mathematical linguistics. Among all the interdisciplinary subjects, sociology and psychology contribute a lot to the development of language learning and teaching. Sociolinguistics studies the ways in which language interacts with society in relation to race, nationality, regional, social and political groups, and the interactions of individuals within groups whereas psycho-linguistics focuses on how language is influenced by memory, attention, recall and constraints on perception to understand the human development.

The extent and importance of language learning-teaching in an age of rapid growth of scientific knowledge make it reasonable and significant to define some key concepts within this issue. No doubt, in Indian context, emphasis is laid on learning grammar rules, lists of vocabulary, and sentences for translation which usually has little relationship to the real world. Oral practice is limited to students reading aloud the sentences they translate following Grammar-Translation Method. Inclusion of new courses at graduate and post-graduate levels in the universities compelled the authorities to think ahead with regards to implementation of some new teaching-learning methodologies other than the prevalent ones.

One such method fulfilling the needs of learners as per current trends is E-communication which has made a huge range of networking possibilities including special interest groups, support groups, discussion and chat rooms etc. It not only gives us access to the experiences of many others, but also enables us to locate and create the 'local' knowledge that relates to our own needs. Computer Aided Language Learning (CALL) is an excellent example of it which is based on the theme of 'Learning to Learn' involving in it strategies of learning, thinking, planning, and self-monitoring that turned the affair more instructional rather than participative role of teachers. However, these are not easily accessible to learners from remote areas.

Current Trends being adopted for ELT



The integration of English with technology - computer literacy - enables learners to communicate effectively. It characterizes the knowledge and skills that are required to process computer-mediated text structures as opposed to those mediated by traditional printed books. Internet has emerged as an inseparable trend of English teaching which has brought a revolution in human cultural development. Highly intensified use of information and communication technology (ICT) has made information easily accessible to common mass. The massive use of ICT has also contributed to the many new possibilities of using technology for teaching English.

In the early days of technical innovations, teaching resources like audio cassettes, popular movie clips, video clips, online radio and television, YouTube, etc. were used as excellent media to illustrate varieties of spoken English. These resources presented samples of speech and mannerisms which helped to develop speaking as well as listening skills. Documentaries, interviews, educational narratives, newscasts were welcomed as source for many difficult-to-find spoken English varieties.

The age of globalization where a person has to communicate in English with people from various nations of the world, demands for priority to learning goals as per students' needs. The new Computer Aided Language Learning tools like Computer-Mediated English, Web-based learning, E-mail, Blogs, Skype, Mobile phones, I-pods are among the some which have provided language teaching a new horizon. The use of acronyms, smiles, winks, etc. is examples of global-computer-mediated-communications which has received serious attention in English teaching. Web-based classes have emerged as the most promising alternative way to study English and fastened distance learning, online education, and e-learning. Advances in information technology and new developments in learning science are providing opportunities to create well-designed, learner-centered, interactive, affordable, efficient, flexible e-learning environments. E-mail appeared as a user-friendly application with which teachers and students can integrate e-mail based activities into their curriculum. The same is with blogs which provides a web-based space for writing. Internet messenger services Skype, team viewer, etc. with audio-visual functions have enabled students to talk with their instructors far away. The most familiar communication technology within the reach of learners is mobile phones. Learners can surf on the web and learn vocabulary from the dictionary. Recording facility provided in cell phones makes it possible for students to record their voice and the voice of a native speaker and compare their pronunciations. IPod technology enables users to produce, organize, deliver, and use texts, images, audio and video. This makes it possible to develop all skills of English.

Language Lab has shown its presence as an essential tool for students to learn speaking English in a formal classroom environment. It has enabled them to enhance, extend, and transform their skills for better use of technology in both personal and professional scenario. Reforms and initiatives in the technical education system are expected to provide learners



strengths and capabilities in application of professional knowledge and skills; and leadership qualities including spirit of team work.

In order to facilitate learning, teachers must be competent, possess self-esteem, hold authority within the classroom, show compassion, respect for individuals and be flexible to be effective facilitators, teachers need to be accomplished in the educational attributes they may want students to acquire. Reorientation of educational policies is the need of the hour so as to confront the challenges and relate it to public interests and concerns.

Emerging Trends: Needs & Relevance

Language as a means of communication serves immense purposes. Especially when it comes to global communication, no language except than English has gained so much of recognition to fulfill the needs. As the researcher has discussed earlier, English in India is perceived as a status symbol. Even those unable to afford expensive English medium education for their children aspire to send their children in such types of schools. Mushroom growth of English medium schools in every nook and corner of country is an outcome of this mentality. In bilingual Indian context, Grammar-Translation method was considered to be most suitable which was later on rejected by some linguists on the ground of learners' involvement in lengthy process of mental translation and lack of fluency.

To solve the issue of fluency, there came into existence a method popularly known as Direct Method or Communicative approach. But the drawback with it in common was that of accuracy. Also, the rural and under-developed background of learners appeared as a hindrance. Mother tongue friendly environment did not allow the learners to adapt them as per the needs of the approach. The application of basic theories of language acquisition and language learning can well be differentiated here. The process of learning by making efforts can never equal to that of effortless learning. The two methods also fell short of visual effect while it is an established fact that strong memory much depends on the theory of association.

These were some issues which led linguists to think of concepts of Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, etc. With the advent of computer and internet, Computer Aided Language Learning (CALL) became popular. The reason was also that it provided learners with open access to a large amount of learning materials and well trained language instructors at anytime, anywhere basis. The audio-visual impact of modern technological tools made language learning easier than ever before. Teachers no longer need to be physically present, and the traditional classroom size and schedules are becoming less important with availability of classes on the Internet. The days are gone when the transfer of information was made in printed sources by asking students to memorize it. Information is now found mostly on-line, just one click away.

The changing and challenging needs of the day cannot be expected to be achieved with traditional methods. So, the researcher made a thorough analysis of the subject matter and found it necessary to describe in brief approaches and methods being adopted by Indian teachers and learners and he also tried to justify in the following few paragraphs what the relevance of adoption of current trends of language learning is and why it is needed.

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