



RECENT TRENDS AND NEW PERSPECTIVES IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world' By Nelson Mandela. The 21st century seems to have practically adopted this thought; hence a productive change in the world of English Language Teaching and learning is quite noticeable. The English language has become the language of masses as this is the only language that can be understood by everyone all around the world. The English language has become the language of confidence for those who have still been struggling to use it without any barrier in their subconscious minds and the language of dominance for those who have achieved fluency and use it like a tool in the various competitions such as debate, extempore, paper presentations and Model United Nations (MUN) etc.

The younger generation of the digital India seems to be determined to hone their language skills so as to attain a passport which would promise them to get a better future and status. The teachers certainly in this context have been playing a pivotal role, possessing various approaches and methodologies in their portfolio; they have been contributing in making the language more acceptable and adaptable by introducing new trends and bringing forth new perspectives into the classroom.

Undoubtedly, new trends have been emerging in the field of English language teaching that have propelled the language at the stage of maturity. This paper observes three major aspects that contribute in the making of new trends and perspective:

1. Change in purpose and needs of teaching and learning English language.
2. Change in perspective of the 21st century generation towards learning the language with specific reference to trends prevalent in the Engineering colleges of Punjab.
3. Ways for teachers to be up-to-date regarding new trends (ELT) teaching learning process.

Keywords: Language, Skills, Communication and Education

INTRODUCTION

Shri C. Rajgopalachari once wrote "English language is the greatest gift of Goddess Saraswati to India". English is used as a Lingua-Franca in India as it has made the social and economic exchange between people of different communities and cultures practically possible. But, Is India blessed with a large number of people who have enough English Verbal Communication to notice the changes in the field of Science and Technology? Is the 21st century generation of India ready to adapt to the changes happening in the various sectors around the world?

The present paper considering the English language getting mature in every walk of life talks



about the new goals of teaching and learning English language and new trends prevalent in the Engineering colleges of Punjab along with the tips for an English teacher to keep him or herself abreast with the new trends in the language teaching area.

CHANGE IN PURPOSE AND NEEDS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE RESPECTIVELY

1. The importance of the English language in educational industry is crystal clear as many countries have made English as an official language. Consequently, the English Language Teaching (ELT) has become one of the major growth industries around the world in the recent years.
2. Further, it continues to remain as the world's language for international communication as the whole world is heading towards the formation of a global village. Therefore, English has become the necessary business language to enter a global workforce, whether it is customer service and sales or marketing and communications.
3. People are learning the language to have access to a greater wealth of entertainment as many of the world's top films, books and music are published and produce in English. Works by some of the world's most famous writers are in the language in which they were intended to read or heard. For example: The works of Shakespeare will take on a new meaning when you are able to speak English.
4. Interestingly, apart from the schooling and organized education systems prevalent in India, the competitive examination scenario also reflects the importance of English. English constitutes a major portion of almost all competitive examinations in India. Moreover, International conferences symposia, and seminars, & major sports events such as the Olympics are held in English. Active participation in these events, however, also demands an ability to communicate effectively with colleagues and participants etc.
5. English language teaching has broadly realized its importance from classes to the masses. For instance formal properties of a language are learned in the classroom and are used to interact with people in the outer world.
6. Proficiency in English is considered as one of the important employability skills at global level. Undoubtedly, Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and Information Technology (IT) companies in India recruit engineering candidates who have effective communication skills.
7. People in the 21st century have relatively been going more ambitious. Fluency in English language can place you to the best Universities of the world if you aspire to receive higher education in any field Science & Technology, Career in Engineering, Hotel management, Medical Sciences or Teaching, aviation, computers, media industry, diplomacy and tourism etc. English is primarily a library language meaning that the student must understand enough to gain access to knowledge contained in textbooks and particularly in periodicals and journals in order to extract information and keep abreast with latest technologies.
8. It is an accepted truth that if one wants to take a full advantage of the internet and World Wide Web, it is possible only by learning English; because most of the browsers are still unable to handle multilingual data presentation. Thus, the English language provides the chief means of access to high-tech communication and information. Can we conclude that the English language has gone matured and will be dominating every sector in the coming ages?

CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE OF THE 21ST CENTURY GENERATION TOWARDS LEARNING THE LANGUAGE WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO TRENDS PREVALENT IN THE ENGINEERING COLLEGES OF PUNJAB

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION FOR ENGINEERS: English communication competence plays an important role in the academic life and career of engineering students. As a professional, an



engineer is required to communicate with the clients of diverse fields, academic and national level. If they fail to deliver their ideas appropriately and effectively, it may have a negative impact on their image as engineers and they are observed with the low profile of engineering. Nowadays, every Engineering student has realized the importance of communication and therefore, and he/she wants to be a better communicator.

RECENT TRENDS IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES OF PUNJAB : Engineering colleges of Punjab have observed various approaches in the field of ELT, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning, Cooperative Language Learning, Task-based Language Teaching, and Text-based Instruction. However, Communicative English Language Teaching Approach in integration with the ICT has recently been dominating the English Language Teaching Classroom in the Engineering Colleges of Punjab.

Communicative English (theory subject) and Communicative English Laboratory (practical), a course for undergraduate engineering and technology, students studying at engineering colleges in Punjab, plays a significant role in enhancing the skills of engineering students. It comprises of the five skills of learning – Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and thinking.

ROLE OF COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH LABORATORY IN EMPOWERING COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS : Training in the CE laboratory is given with the assistance of Networked Computers through a specially designed software. Major advantages of the Communicative English Laboratory include: students are asked to practice in pairs & groups; hence they feel confident to speak in front of the public (class). Students are trained to face interviews, group discussions and public speaking thus students develop their soft skills, interpersonal skills, decision making, business communication and pre-placement training - lab meets the employers' demand. The shy learners can get more benefits as they are monitored individually by the monitor. However, the goal practically is not attainable for the slow and shy learners due to the limited exposure of the laboratory sessions.

RECOMMENDATION : According to the syllabus of Punjab Engineering colleges, the laboratory is compulsory for the students only for a period of one semester in the first year of B.Tech where each student as per the timetable gets only two hours practice in a week. Achieving fluency in the target language within the period of six months seems to be a hard nut to crack because language learning is a continuous process or developing a habit. In order to develop the effective communication skills which are the base of developing employability skills routinely practice of improving communication skills is essential throughout the B.Tech course.

History has observed the fact that several slow learners have become achievers by becoming scientists and writers later in their life. The Following recommended directions may certainly assist Non-English medium background or slow learners or weaker students of the Engineering classes to be employable:

1. Communicative English Laboratory sessions must be included in the syllabus of the 2nd and 3rd year also so as to keep the students in touch with Verbal Communication Skills and this will help them to reflect upon their own learning with the passage of time..
2. Keeping learners' needs and purposes of learning the target language, an innovation Syllabus must be designed for the students to be followed during the 2nd and 3rd year. The present syllabus and exam pattern are giving chance to develop written English skills, I recommend that there must be a specific pattern to assess effective communication skills.
3. The curriculum of 2nd & 3rd year should be structured to include the employability skills such as teamwork skills, problem solving or negotiation skills, interpersonal skills, writing skills, management skills, entrepreneurship skills and leadership skills etc.
4. A culture of conversing in English Language must be given utmost priority, especially in technical colleges and this is possible by hiring those teachers who have effective verbal communication skills in the target language. An engineering student approximately takes a time



period of a year to shed their inhibitions of speaking in English with their teachers, a culture of English speaking will reduce this time period and contribute to making students more confident in their approach towards employability.

5. Students' attitudes to communication matters the most. We as teachers observe that a few students in every class do possess the intelligence necessary for getting admission for higher education, but they lag behind in the English communication competence because their personal opinions, attitudes and beliefs often act as strong barriers to effective communication. An ELT teacher must be aware of tapping the subconscious mind of a student so as to help them to realize & overcome all sorts of barriers which hamper the performance of students.

WAYS FOR TEACHERS TO KEEP THEMSELVES UP-TO-DATE REGARDING NEW TRENDS IN ELT

ELT classroom is continuously changing and teachers must be prepared to meet needs of their students. This is possible if the role of a teacher in the ELT classes is crystal clear to the teachers and to the administrators as well.

I call your strong agreement that the quality or effectiveness of teachers is determined by their linguistic, teaching and intercultural competence rather than their being native speakers of English. Is academic qualification enough to equip the teachers with current practices? Continuing with the Professional Development or CPD gives the answer better.

“Continuous” refers that we teachers should not stop learning once we reach a certain age or stage in our career. Regarding “professional”, we teachers collectively need to realize the scope of our profession and must focus on further learning and development. Therefore, CPD activities can be any activity which enhances or develop your skills, knowledge, understanding or any aspect of your teaching work.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING WITH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT : It is essential for schools/ colleges/ universities to adopt rich professional learning opportunities for its teachers.

- CPD assures a high level of expertise and enables the teacher to keep their professional skills and pedagogical knowledge up-to-date. Therefore, the quality of teaching and student's learning enhances.
- CPD is the link between teacher's individual skills and the contribution they make to the school/college, society & finally to the growth of a country.

RECENT TRENDS TO CPD:

1. Blogs
2. Reflection Groups & Learning networks
3. Magazines & Journals
4. Peer Observation
5. Professional Organization

Teachers just starting out on an ELT career could think about doing:

1. Cambridge English's "Teacher Knowledge Test"
2. Cambridge English's "CELTA & DELTA".
3. EFLU, Hyderabad, "PGCTE & PGDTE"

Teachers with some experience, might consider

1. Cambridge English's "In service Certificate in English Language Teaching"
2. Cambridge English's DELTA"
3. Trinity College London's "Dip TEASOL"



Distance learning courses called Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and Webinars are handsome source to CPD. For reference www.futurelearn.com & www.evosections.pbworks.com – courses are accessible on Mobile, tablet and desktop, so can fit learning around your life.

In order to hear about the current debates, research, trends, methods/ approaches, etc that are being shared around the world some sort of networking and sharing of ideas beyond a teacher's immediate context is a key aspect of professional development. To facilitate inspiration and continuous development as a teacher, there are professional organizations to join:

1. IATEFL, International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, (<http://www.iatefl.org/>): one of the most thriving communities of ELT teachers in the world.
2. TESOL International Association (<http://www.tesol.org/home>) TESOL has been bringing together educators, researchers, administrators, and students to advance the profession of teaching English to speakers of other languages.
3. TEACH ENGLISH- BRITISH COUNCIL (<http://teachingenglish.org.uk/>) : Free access to number of journals, research publications, webinars, instructional videos, articles, training courses and workshops both as self study and with a trainer

While analyzing the data following components were taken into consideration (considering the objectives of teaching language):

1. Vocabulary
2. Pronunciation
3. Fluency & accuracy
4. Stress & Intonation
5. Punctuation

ELT MAGAZINES & JOURNALS

Latest research into language acquisition and teaching, adapting/adopting teaching ideas and materials, or gaining an understanding of key debates and current issues in the profession, an easy way to do this is to read ELT magazines or Journals, or other publications such as newsletters.

1. English Teaching Professional Magazine: Practical magazine for English Language Teachers worldwide
2. Modern English Teacher (the latest developments and trends in ELT theory and thinking.)
3. Humanising Language Teaching Magazines (HLT)- new ideas in the ELT Classroom
4. EL Gazette- a free newspaper for English language and international education

TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE THEORETICAL SIDE OF THINGS AND GET IN TOUCH WITH SOME OF THE LATEST RESEARCH, SOME OF THE GO-TO JOURNALS FOR ELT INCLUDE

1. **ELT Journal**- links the everyday concern of practitioners with insights gained from relevant academic disciplines such as applied linguistics, education, psychology, and sociology and aims to provide medium for informed discussion of the principles and practice with determine the ways in which English is taught and learnt around the world.
2. **TESOL Quarterly** fosters inquiry into English language teaching and learning by providing a forum for TESOL professionals to share their research findings and explore ideas and relationships in the field.
3. **English Today Journal Quarterly** by Cambridge University Press (The International Review of the English Language). It provides a focus or forum for all sorts of news and opinion from around the world.



REFLECTION GROUPS & LEARNING NETWORKS

The idea of Reflection group is that a group or colleagues meet on a (semi-) regular basis to discuss and reflect together and discover if they have done something constructive, rather than just having a chat. The aim of reflecting is to learn and further your professional development, not to fall into a complaints sessions about all your lazy students. Nowadays, many people in ELT, use the term "NLP" to refer to an online group or community, so something like a reflection and learning group beyond your immediate and physical teaching context. To build up your own online NLP, you could use:

1. Social networking sites Twitter, facebook
2. Professional networking sites like Xing.com or Linkdin
3. English language forum: teachingenglish.org.uk

BLOGGING/BLOGS & PEER OBSERVATIONS

A blog post might inspire you to think about or reflect a specific aspect of your teaching, to plan, to try out something new (plan), try it out then evaluate it afterwards-before you know it you are learning and developing. EXAMPLES: <http://scottthonburry.wordpress.com>, <http://david-crystal.blogspot.de/>, , <http://jeremyharmer.wordpress.com/>. Regarding Peer Observation, Robert John Meehan said "The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration our growth is limited to our own perspective".

CONCLUSION

New trends and new perspective on the ELT domain has been emerging because English Language is serving as a Lingua Franca hence the scope of learning and teaching English Language getting widely recognized. *Language is a means of communication through which we transfer out ideas, emotions, and thought; express our love, anger and get understood by other persons.* It is essential for education industry of the digital India to accept the fact of the growing demands of employable people because education is the backbone of economic, social and political life of India. Accepting the fact & taking necessary steps to achieve the new goals will bring a speedy development in the various sectors of India. (Words limit 2785)

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