

# Current Trends in English Language Teaching

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## Abstract

Trends in the domain of English Language Teaching can be identified at two levels. One, at the level of research that is carried out in the field and, second, the kind of practices adopted and implemented in the classrooms. With the changing paradigms there has been a shift from one approach to the other in the past couple of years. And with the addition of tools and technologies of ICT, the field has seen a widespread movement towards the innovative teaching techniques. Also the availability of different resources has made it easy for the teachers and researchers to experiment in different ways. This paper outlines the current trends observed in ELT with a view to give new researchers a direction to pick up the way for them.

## Introduction

The field of education as a whole and specifically the English Language Teaching domain have observed trends such as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), Blended Learning, E-Learning, Task-based and Situated Language Learning and Teaching, Flipped Classroom Techniques and Edutainment with the help of Internet and other technologies in the classroom.

Having said this, the next sections of the paper highlight the major trends the ELT domain has undergone in recent past.

### 1. Shift to communication

In past few years, the language teaching domain has seen a shift toward the communication as a core element. It means that the focus of language learning and teaching has been centred on the concept of communication. Today, in the engineering colleges and the management institutions, the syllabuses focus on English for communication instead of English as a language. One major shift that we have seen due to the globalization is widespread importance of the English language as a tool that connects two individuals globally.

English language gives an edge to its users as they can communicate with most of the people around the globe without much hassle. And this is the reason why this shift towards communication has been observed.

### 2. Change in perspective

Observing the above shift toward communication, there has also been observed a need from the side of students of all branches to get a certification that helps them to prove their proficiency in the English language. IELTS, TESOL, TESL are some of the certifications that help students to establish their credibility in terms of the language they know and how they can make a difference at the organizations by communicating well. In past few years, research and discussions in the ELT have focused on “the issues of World Englishes and English as a lingua franca (ELF) rather than simply

referring to any English spoken outside of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia as EFL”.

(Sun, 2014)

Knowing good level of English gives an advantage to the students and even teachers are not an exception when it comes to their migration to other nations for better prospects.

### **3. Change in teaching objectives**

Today in most countries most subjects are taught in English. So English is not treated as just a medium. It has become a link language that leads the students toward an overall development. It allows them to learn different cultures, acquire new information, and gain new knowledge which results into their multidimensional development. Through English students are able to discover the problems the world is facing and what their contributions could be (Cates, 1997). Also the teachers are using the language as a tool to help students become responsible citizens (Brown, 1994).

With the changing aims of developing responsible global citizens, the English language has seen greater importance in terms of enabling the students to discover more and do better in their lives.

### **4. Approaches are changing**

As mentioned in the beginning of this work, a shift in the approaches has also been observed. The ELT has seen The Direct Method, Grammar-translation, Audio-lingual, The structural approach, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response (TPR), Communicative language teaching (CLT), The Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Immersion, Task-based language learning, The Natural Approach and The Lexical Syllabus (Richards, and Rodgers, 1986).

Most ELT professionals are well-verse with all the mentioned approaches and methods. It indicates the level of importance that has been given to the English language and the kind of experiments that have been carried out in the past several years. There has been more than thousand quality thesis written defending various approaches and their advantages. Many researchers favoured the approaches they found fit for their classrooms and others have defended the ones they found suitable. Above all, the addition of ICT has given an edge to the English Language Teaching. Initially, website and now – the apps are playing a pivotal role in the ELT. To cope with ICT, several approaches including the TBLT have been transformed in a way so that the integration of ICT in ELT becomes natural and fruitful.

### **5. Rise of computers and Internet**

With the advent of computing technologies, the ELT got revolutionized. It helps teachers develop and maintain learner interest in the process of language teaching-learning. With this change, there has also been several research works that threw light on how language teaching can be made more effective and more productive.

Several software applications have gain popularity which got the teach back up and helped students become more fluent in the English language usage. Azlin Zainal's (2012) research has shown positive outcomes of integrating ICT in English language and literature classrooms. There have been several such records that depict the effectiveness of incorporating ICT and other technologies in the English classrooms that gave outstanding results.

## 5. Social media is gaining importance

As came Internet, more tools followed and one of the most influencing elements that has touched upon education on the whole is social media which includes blogging, video sharing and the personal social diaries on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and many more.

The social media platform served as a link between the teachers and students and reduced the distance between them. It has helped teachers move beyond the four walls of classrooms and be an authentic supporter to their students whenever they want. The social media has also helped students in the manner of making them independent learners as they could communicate virtually with anyone irrespective of the place and time.

The social has given them a platform where they can develop and demonstrate their effective grip over the English language and improve their prospects globally. The positive utilization of social media has resulted into making students create, connect, and collaborate which has made them effective and confident at using the language online (Loyola, 2014).

## 6. The MOOC is driving

In the era of Internet, the learners are growing beyond classroom too. The MIT OpenCourseWare initiative lead by Massachusetts Institute of Technology has done wonders by allowing anyone to become a part of the lectures and courses delivered at the MIT. Later this resulted into the development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) that allows students to learn anything over the Internet and get certified.

These easy to follow courses are made available by different platforms and serve thousands of students online today. Kim (2015) states that the MOOCs are opening new educational horizons and they are an “innovation with the potential to have large impact. Also the MOOCs can prove highly useful under the teacher supervision as many researchers have discovered that small peer groups gain better advantage when MOOCs are used for language learning (Coetzee et al. 2015; Towndrow et al. 2013)

## 7. Leading the teacher development

In the field of ELT, many professional development seminars and certificate programs are offered online. It helps teachers to upgrade themselves. Online conferences and webinars help teachers explore what is happening the language teaching domain and improve the quality of their delivery in the classrooms.

Apart from the online trainings, the rise of associations in every subject discipline has strengthened the teachers. Such associations give a closed group exposure to the teachers and become a driving force of transformation. For English teachers, there are several bodies that offer membership and offer several benefits including training and research.

## Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction, in education every domain is undergoing a transformation and ELT being a part of almost all the disciplines as a driver of communication, has experienced the most. With changing times and

technologies the educators have been able to adopt and cope with the newness of their encounters. The educators should remain proactive to the upcoming revolutions too and try their hands on it as things come.

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