



The New Trends in English Language Testing

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The field of language education is changing at an ever-increasing rate. Traditional notions of education are giving way to newer, more innovative ways of thinking about how we learn, teach and acquire knowledge. This article makes hot spot about new trends in English language testing that have supplemented English teaching and testing in authenticity and literacy such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills of students. English is the only valid language that can be understood by everyone all around the world. Students learn faster and easier than before because of the use of technology in schools. If students are trained during their school years, they have the chance of becoming experts in technology. It is proved by the research that has occurred; early beginnings are always beneficial, and there are new trends without using technology. Through this research, these new trends will be discussed. Learning English and using new trends in education in schools makes students willing to learn the language. The aim of this study is to review new trends in English learning activities that are being used by instructors and learners recently. The study was conducted on the base of a literature survey. We need it in different fields of life. This research report has been prepared to help educational teachers understand current trends in language education. This work is by no means exhaustive. It is, rather, a meta-analysis of the trends that can be identified based on current research. Its intention is to stimulate discussion, provoke thought and generate reflective responses. It is worth stating that one assumption underpinning this research is that students and their needs, hopes and aspirations must be kept at the heart of language learning and education. Readers are encouraged to share this report with colleagues, use it as pre-reading material for professional development sessions and staff meetings.

Key words: *English language testing, new trends in English.*



Introduction

In the present times, so many books have been published in English about the English language in general and English Language Teaching in particular. These books view the subject differently by presenting a plethora of voices trying to liberalise themselves from the clutches of traditional methods of teaching. The innovation in this paper pertains both to methodology and materials used in language teaching. Moreover, this article brings out the subtle distinction between the scholarly perception of language as treated in research and pedagogy. The argument advances as the paper proceeds with trends of education with specific reference methodologies adopted, the bygone methods, the peer practice, the present trend, new teaching design, new devices, the need for change, the ICT and English language and also the CALL.

General Trend

English language teaching and testing has undergone tremendous changes over the years, especially the last ten years. Students are burdened with studying, learning and grasping the materials, and of course, lectures with the collection of relevant information from prescribed texts. Many career alternatives that were once regarded insignificant are now gaining importance such as communication skills, soft skills, technical skills, interpersonal skills, ICT literacy etc. The need for chiselled graduates to merge successfully in the tough competition of survival in the global market is in great demand nowadays. For this, a change in the trend especially the teaching learning process of English language has to undergo a transition for the betterment. Seasons change, fashion changes, attitudes of human beings change but it is disheartening to note that in the last century English curriculum has hardly undergone any change.

Methodology

This research highlights that there are thirteen trends in teaching of English. Firstly, the goal is to produce fully competent English knowing bilinguals rather than imitation of native speakers. The purpose is not to aspire to become native speakers of English because we are already native speakers of our own language but to focus on English as a means of communication. Secondly, English is not viewed as an end in itself but as a means to learn content such as science and mathematics. These new trends is determined by using different literature in English language testing and teaching, and these trends are discussed in the following points.



Content and language Integrate learning (CLIC)

The CLIC is an approach where the English teacher uses cross-curricular content and so the students learns both the content and English (Abilasha, 2014: 22-25).

Change in the Approach to Teaching Culture

Both the local and international culture dominates in English language classes. There is less focus on teaching the culture of native speakers of English unless there is a specific purpose for doing so (Boraie, 2013: 12).

Changing the View of English Teachers

It is increasingly being recognised that the quality or effectiveness of teachers is determined by their linguistic, teaching and intercultural competence rather than being native speakers of English (Patil, 2012; 45).

Change in Teaching Content and Test Design

Teachers use a range of local texts or English translations of literature in the classroom. The use of language and a variety of accents in listening activities or tests is encouraged in the English language classroom (Kim, 2011: 5-6).

E-Learning

With the proliferation of tablets and smart phones, it is believed that textbooks will disappear. Furthermore, the access to knowledge in terms of flexibility and mobility has changed drastically (Cooney& Keogh., 2007: 65).

Strategic Teaching and Learning

Teaching in English language classes focuses on fostering the students' thinking, as well as language content, outcomes and learning activities. There are significant and complex student-teacher interactions inside and outside the classroom. The ramification of learning is emerging as a way to make language learning more engaging and relevant to the younger generation (Adrian, 2004: 6-4).

Teachers as Lifelong Learners

In a knowledge-based society and to remain competitive and employable, teachers are expected to engage in continuous professional development or professional learning activities until the end of their careers. As with any other profession, teachers are also expected to assume a greater responsibility for their own professional learning, continually developing their knowledge and skills. Apart from the abovementioned items, Adrian (Ibid) lists out the following as the recent trend that are very much prevalent in English language teaching. They are:

- a. Networking, interest and support groups.
- b. Learner centeredness and learners needs.
- c. Reflective practice and teacher learning.
- d. Portfolio development for teachers.
- e. Syllabus design /materials development.
- f. Criticism of published materials.
- g. English as an International language.
- h. Corpora.

English Teaching and the ICT

The third dimension of that which is inseparable from English teaching is an advancement of Information and Communication Technology [ICT]. The field of the ELT has been deeply pervaded by the ICT. The easy access to technology has made information possible for enhancement of the learning program and about 80% of it is in English at the outset. The English teachers regarded the internet as one of the alternative media to teach language (N. E. & Walser, 2009: 133-144). The followings are some of the ICT enabled teaching activities.

Web-based Learning

In recent years the terminology has been changed for web based learning; it was called as technology based, distance learning or online education. In the end it is now called e-learning and web based learning. A variety of basic language skills can be developed with the help of web-based language learning activities. It is known that there are four basic skills in English which are listening, speaking, writing, and reading. These skills can be put on the web and made interactive in a variety of ways. This includes Internet communication tools such as m learning, email, blogs and chats. These tools provide integrated environment for teachers and students. Students generally feel positive about web-based learning tools, when they are:

- Well-designed, easy to learn, easy to use
- Good as support, not as replacement of lectures

- Diverse in tool features, i.e. chat, bulletin board, is relevant and tied into the specific course structure and content (Storey et al., 2002: 1-3).

Technology is developing and changing very fast, and if it is not used effectively and correctly some problems can arise. Technologies that can be used in education as follows:

E-mail

E-mail is a communication tool that is being used in language learning. E-mail was in use before the Internet existed and is probably the most commonly used Internet application. By getting a single e-mail account both foreign teachers and students can join e-mail assisted language activities. For learners of English e-mail is an excellent way to communicate with their instructors because of its usefulness and easiness. With a single e-mail account, foreign teachers and students can integrate e-mail based activities into their curriculum (LeLoup, 1997:3-4).

If we look at literature international key projects that enable students to correspond with native speakers of the target language, they are easily implement where participants have the necessary access, equipment, and foreign contacts (Houser et al, 2002: 3-4). Web-based learning is another area in which e-mail is being used. Ramazani (1994: 4-6) tells of an activity called The Weekly Essay. A few days before the class meets, his students send e-mail essays that they have written about a particular reading. In this way the students are better prepared for the class discussion of the essays. Ramazani (Ibid) uses another e-mail activity to prepare his students for class ahead of time. He asks them to submit short, one-sentence summaries of a reading. Next he organises these ideas on a handout that he then uses in class for both brainstorming and stimulating class discussions. Similarly, the teacher can assign a debate topic and ask the students to begin to discuss it via e-mail. When the time comes to form debate teams in class, the students will already have a satisfactory understanding of both sides of the issue and will be able to make a more informed decision about where they stand.

English teachers can benefit from web sites that include e-mail accounts (Yahoo, Hotmail, G-mail etc.) for no extra cost. So teachers can create a discussion topic and send it to students via e-mail. When receiving the e-mails students start to write compositions or essays in English and then send back to teacher. This helps them to improve writing skills and vocabulary.

Blogs

We investigated blogging as a form of personal communication and expression, with a specific interesting uncovering the range of motivations driving individuals to create and maintain blogs (Nardi et al., 2004: 11). Blogs are well suited to serve as on-line personal



journals for students, particularly since they normally enable uploading and linking of files. Language learners could use a personal blog, linked to a course, as an electronic portfolio, showing development over time. By publishing the blog on the Internet, the student has the possibility of writing for their classmates. Pinkman (2005: 12-24) indicates that blogging becomes communicative and interactive when participants assume multiple roles in the writing process, as writers who write and post, as readers/reviewers who respond to other writers' posts, and as writer-readers who, returning to their own posts, react to criticism of their own posts. Readers in turn can comment on what they read, although blogs can be placed in secured environments as well. Self-publishing encourages ownership and responsibility on the part of students, who may be more thoughtful (in content and structure) if they know they are writing for a real audience. Blog discussions from the site <http://blog-assisted-language-learning.blogspot.com/students> discuss topics to develop writing and reading skills. But students should type only in English this is very important for their developments in terms of writing and vocabulary

Online Tests and Quizzes

Teachers in the classroom have always used tests and quizzes. Teachers have to write then print it out, copy it and then deliver the papers to students. Students are reading the questions and using pen or pencils to mark the option. This is the only and traditional way of taking a test. But learners are using online tests more commonly. Teachers do not have to print and deliver the papers in the classroom. Also teachers can give feedbacks to their students which is very important and they do not have to evaluate marks from exam papers. By clicking on a button students can see their exam results. Teachers and students are now using several test formats interactively. Test software can be used to create interactive multiple-choice, short answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching, ordering, and gap filling exercises for the web. Online English learning web sites provide quizzes or tests including the four skills of the language. Students are click on the correct answers and can then check their results. It is possible for teachers to create their own web pages and evaluating students' language learning (Shinagawa& Schneider, 2007: 112-115).

Instant Messenger

ICQ was the first general messenger service in the early 1996 (www.worldstart.com/tips/tips.php/1498). During the years a variety of messenger services such as MSN Messenger and Yahoo Messenger began to serve to people. If students are required to type in English they can only have the chance of improve their writing and reading skills through typing and reading the messages they get from their peers or instructors. Moreover, students of English have better interaction with teachers in this virtual environment as they can communicate with not only teachers but also peers and share



information. The most important aspect is live interaction between teachers and students. For example when it is talked about MSN Messenger, it provides several features beyond text, audio and video, and file transfer. Messenger is used with a Webcam and allows users to see each other in a small video window while talking. So students can talk with their peers or teachers in English in order to develop their listening and speaking skills. In figure 2 it is shown that students and teachers can have the chance to talk each other by using their webcams.

Skype

Nowadays every messenger services have audio functions and technological equipment such as laptop computers that have cameras on them. So students can talk with their instructors and peers far away. Skype is a new emerging technology and the potential application of language learning and teaching needs to be further explored (Wu, 2005: 78). Students can speak with native speakers of language and compare their pronunciation with a native speaker. Using this application can develop speaking skills. Also students and teachers do not have to pay for this; they just pay for Internet access.

Mobile Devices

Today's world has been changed over the years and technology has developed. Mobile learning is one of those technologies that have been used for a few years. Firstly mobile learning means that people are learning whenever and wherever they want with their mobile phones, PDA's and other technological devices if they have. Mobile learning is also defined as any service or facility that supplies learners with general electronic information and educational content that aids in acquisition of knowledge regardless of location and time (Lehner & Nosekabel, 2002: 103-106). Vavoula and Sharples (2002: 2-4) suggest three ways in which learning can be considered mobile as learning is mobile in terms of space, it is mobile in different areas of life, and it is mobile with respect to time. As it can be understood from these definitions that, mobile learning system is available for delivering education to learners anytime and anywhere they need it. Mobile phones are the most popular device among people.

Blended Learning

As teachers combine digital media with more traditional forms of teaching, their course materials and resources reflect the trend. The **Combined Pre-Sessional Course** offered by King's English Language Centre (King's College London) combines face-to-face teaching and online lessons. For teachers who want to pepper their everyday teaching with practical online activities, Lindsay Canfield and Jill Hadfield's **Interaction Online - creative**

activities for blended learning emphasises the interaction between teachers and learners (N. E., & Walser: 2009: 133-133).

Embodied Learning

Embodied learning is based on the idea that learning is not just about remembering. It involves using the mind and the body, collaborating, discussing and exploring. Learners need to be emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially engaged. Courses such as **Doodle Town** (Macmillan Education) use visual, audio and hands-on activities to stimulate and inspire learning and gets young learners to draw, create, and be inquisitive. **Orbit** (Richmond) develops the young learners' socio-emotional and cognitive skills through a language course that follows the story of a ferret and children who go on adventures in multicultural environments (McNamara, 2011: 500-515).

Inquiry-based learning (or: 'learning in a complex word)

The scenarios that teachers come across in some course materials can seem simplified and unrealistic, leading us to wonder if we are adequately training our learners for real life in the 21st century. Courses like **Fast Track 5** (EF Education First Ltd) and **Wider World** (Pearson with the BBC) use authentic video and audio content to bring the real world to teenage learners. They encourage teenagers to practice the soft skills and communication skills needed to take part in the global communities of the 21st century. Aimed at the adult learner, **Perspectives** (National Geographic) uses real-life stories and TED talks to motivate learners to think critically and creatively. Teachers and learners discover how writers and speakers use grammar to express themselves in real life (Road & Drogheda: 2007: 4-5).

Discussion and Findings

The world is changing at a rapid pace. How we learn is changing. How we teach and assess learning is also changing. Old, authoritarian models are giving way to gentler, more collaborative models. Students are as hungry as they ever were to be guided, coached and mentored. Their curiosity about the world around them continues to be piqued. The difference now is that they have that world at their fingertips. They are experiencing the world through technology in a way that their parents and teachers never did. Today's language classroom is vastly different from that of the mid - to late twentieth century. The focus is no longer on grammar, memorisation and learning from rote, but rather using language and cultural knowledge as a means to connect to others around the globe. Geographical and physical boundaries are being transcended by technology as students learn to reach out to the world around them, using their language and cultural skills to facilitate the connections they are eager to make. There is a case for a conceptualised field that is more learner-centered, more collaborative and more technologically driven. The trends in language



learning are moving us forward in such a way as to empower our students to communicate with others across the globe in real time.

Conclusion

The traditional method lays more emphasis on a teacher himself and is teacher centered. Repetitive practice, mechanical drills and memorisation are the hallmarks of the traditional methods. It is called synthetic in which different parts of the language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up. The autocratic or the authoritative role of the teacher pertains to the long cherished traditional notion that pedagogic principles depend on how articulately a teacher teaches. It is imperative to understand the current trends and evaluative methods of the ELT. The theories and methods are constantly evolving in the ELT. The teachers of the ELT are aware of the best practices in teaching and learning English and how they can be made beneficial to the students. It is possible for every child to learn English in the most enjoyable manner if it is supplied with the right kind of materials and pedagogy produced by one's own native wisdom. A beautiful combination of art and science, with a fine tune of as many tools as possible to the repertoire can help an ELT to excel in his/her field.



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