Changing Trends in ELT with Special Reference to India

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Abstract – Today, the teaching of English has changed from traditional classroom methods to more open and diverse practices. The competency in English language is currently assessed as an employability skill for collaboration and authentic communication such as job interviews and international projects. This increased the demand for skilled language teachers who are proficient in technical and professional English. It is true that Massive Open Online Courses has made learning more flexible. Internet is connecting and widening the scope for teachers and learners. Students can now become more self-directed and active in their own learning processes. To be competent and to survive in this ever changing field of English language teaching, the English teachers have to reach the open and flexible platform of e-learning, and remain up-to-date. Use of Web 2.0 services, video lectures, podcasting, tablet computers and mobile apps can assist the teachers of English to make leaning more open, effective and massive, fast and user oriented.

Keywords: *ELT, E-Learning, MOOC, M-Learning, Learning Apps*

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We are living in an age where the human society is rapidly changing as seen never before. The traditional barriers among countries breakdown and a global flattening have occurred in the nature of how global business is conducted. This phenomenon is popularly called globalisation and free market economy is changing the life and lifestyle of people around the world. The catalyst behind this paradigm shift is the emergence of English as a global language. Competency in English is listed as a necessary requirement by global businesses. Many of the surveys conducted among employees say that English is important for career progression, and in fact many of them are not ready to wait longer. They wanted to improve their English significantly in a year or less.

When we consider the second language teaching practices in India, the method followed in most states is to begin with literature. Even before learners could understand the basic structure of a language, literature and grammar studies are introduced, making it much difficult or arousing distaste for the language. The teaching of English is no exception, and in some states it has not have the status of a language. As a result, competent language teachers are unavailable in some areas. Even though colonialism is a contemptuous ideology, the learning of a colonialist's language does not make the learner a colonized. The eversion towards English at a political level is a major hindrance for the leaners of English to master the language.

Today, the teaching of English has changed from traditional classroom methods to more open and diverse practices. The teachers of English should resort to new method in order to be up-to-date and competent to satisfy the changing demands of time. The competency in English language is currently assessed as an employability skill for collaboration and authentic communication such as job interviews and international projects. This increased the demand for skilled language teachers who are proficient in technical and professional English. With the increased use of internet, there is a growing awareness of the need to become more digitally literate. This has paved way to increase creativity and innovation, as well as new roles for learners and teachers. Today teachers can move away from the role as a transmitter of knowledge, and he can be a facilitator and students can now become more self-directed and active in their own learning processes.

USING WEB 2.0

The term Web 2.0 was invented by Darcy DiNucci in 1999 and later popularized by Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty at the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 Conference in late 2004. When Web 1.0 websites provides limited viewing of content in a passive manner, Web 2.0 allows users to interact and collaborate with each other through social media dialogue. The content is created by the users in a virtual community. The Web 2.0 features include social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing,

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web applications etc. Web 2.0 enables an average web user to have social-networking profiles, or personal blogs, and readers can comment directly on a page, that was not common previously.

In the European Commission Joint Research Centre Scientific and Technical Report 'Learning 2.0: The Impact of Web 2.0 Innovations on Education and Training in Europe' (2009), it is mentioned that Web 2.0 can be a practical option for teachers to grow professionally at a personal level (Redecker 2009). The social web allows for more collaborative education. For example, blogs give students a public space to interact with one another and the content of the class (Richardson 2010). Moreover, it can increase the public's understanding of science and technology and rational thinking. It may lead to better communication between researchers and the public, more substantive discussion and popularising scientific thinking.

Hence, Web 2.0 has increased or popularised the use of English language in the internet platform. This has in turn contributed to the development of English language especially its vocabulary. New usages and technical terms are increasing day by day. Moreover, a learner who is actively engaged in the new web based social platforms gets the opportunity to use English more than ever and it enriches his language. As far as the English language teaching is concerned, this change has several positive significances. For instructors, it has opened new teaching methods to support leaners. As Richardson remarks,

Millions of photos, thousands of audio files, and countless other creations are now being added every day to the incredibly vast storehouse of information that the Web has become. As more people get more access to broadband connections and more powerful computers and even easier tools, this trend shows every sign of continuing to grow. We're in the midst of an explosion of technologies that will continue to remake the Web into the community-driven, participatory space.

THE RISE OF E-LEARNING

With the introduction of e-learning, there was a widespread belief that it would replace teachers. It is true that Massive Open Online Courses has made learning more flexible and open but the role of the teachers has not changed. In fact, it has added into the value of the teacher, and teachers could no longer turn away from the technological changes. They have to attain knowledge on how to manipulate technology for more effective teaching. Earlier, the use of audio-visual aids in the classroom was revolutionary in that age and assisted teachers in imparting knowledge making it much easier, and for learners it was a blessing. The current major shift is from physical classrooms to virtual classrooms; the role of the instructor and the learner remains as

such. But the medium has changed; internet is connecting and widening the scope for teachers and learners.

How can this shift affect English language teaching? Precisely, English is the most affected subject and the leaners of English have got a wide variety of choices to learn the language. With the introduction of the virtual classrooms, any competent instructor, who can teach language effectively can run a MOOC and attract students all around the world. It has given rise to more specific learning practices – English for special purposes. Since it is the global language, and it is used for different purposes, or in different contexts, varieties of training methods are evolving to satisfy the needs of the learners. Courses are designed based on the special purposes of English – from basic to advanced levels. The concept of an English teacher transcends the borders, and many professionals are becoming instructors and offer specialised training designed according to the need of the professionals.

To be competent and to survive in this ever changing field of English language teaching, the English teachers have to reach the open and flexible platform of e-learning, and remain up-to-date. If you are a teacher in an institution, you can bring together learners via internet and track their academic activities. There are many methods that can make work paperless and you may conserve trees for the coming generation.

Teachers can maintain a blog to share learning materials, and write reviews and articles. Blog hosting services like Blogger, WordPress, Tumblr etc. offer free blog hosting. Moreover, there are subscription based teaching portal services like Teachable through which teachers can offer course materials. Teachable help teachers to design their own course and market them, thereby reach the global audience.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOOC

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) can be offered via several platforms and it offers the teacher the opportunity to become an icon of his/her special area. The term MOOC was coined to refer to a course developed by Stephen Downes and George Siemens entitled *Connectivism and Connectivity Knowledge* in 2008. Their intention was to exploit the possibility for interactions between wide varieties of participants made possible by online tools so as to provide a richer learning environment than traditional tools would allow.

In 2007, Eren Bali, a Turkish engineer and entrepreneur, built software for a live virtual classroom and saw its potential to democratize educations by allowing anybody to teach and learn online. He launched his company named Udemy – "The Academy of You" – in May 2010 with Oktay

Caglar and Gagan Biyani. Udemy offers paid and free courses, depending on the instructor and hundreds of courses are offered in the field of ELT. Sebastien Thrun founded a company called Udacity in February 2012 to cater to the development of technical skills among engineers to propel career forward. In April 2012, Andrew Ng, a Chinese-American computer scientist and statistician, and Daphne Koller and two other Stanford CS professors, started the company called Coursera which partnered with universities in preparing and offering MOOCs. Massachusetts Institute of Technology developed the MITx platform for offering MOOCs. Later it was renamed edX in association with Harvard University. Now edX consortium has over 30 university partners. In addition to these services, platforms like Chegg offers online tutoring jobs to competent teachers.

MOOCs have opened a wider platform for English language learning, especially in the case of English for special purposes. Several interdisciplinary streams have been evolved. In a developing country like India, MOOCs from the part of the private entrepreneurs are nil. Since the field of education is directly controlled by the government of India, the initiative should come from the part of the policy makers. Even though the government runs educational programmes through radio and television, internet based education is not popular among the mass. National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) is a platform through which IITs and IISc offer online courses. The upcoming SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) platform is an ambitious project from the part of the Indian government where students across all universities in India will be able to earn credits. It is the centralized platform that would bind Indian higher education, both online and offline. English language teachers could enroll as instructors and run their courses.

TOOLS FOR ONLINE ELT

English language teachers can use a number of services to engage their students in the learning process. Google Classroom is a collaborative platform for teachers to simplify creating, distributing, and grading assignments in a paperless way. The primary purpose of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of sharing files between teachers and students. It combines Google Drive for assignment creation and distribution, Google Docs, Sheets and Slides for writing, Gmail for communication, and Google Calendar for scheduling. Teachers can monitor the progress of each student, grade the assignments, and return work along with comments.

LinkedIn SlideShare is a hosting service for professional content including PowerPoint presentations and documents which is now owned by Microsoft Corporation. Users can upload files privately or publicly in PowerPoint, PDF, or OpenDocument formats. For teachers, it is a platform to share knowledge; they can contribute resources to the learners and could support each other. SlidePlayer is also a similar platform for presentation sharing.

Podcasting is another medium that English teachers can use especially to address ESL learners and improve their listening skill. English language teachers can use podcast hosting services to create and share podcasts. There are a number of free and subscription based podcast hosting platforms. Anchor.fm is a free podcast creating site started a few months back. From Anchor, users can share podcast to other platforms. SoundCloud is another audio distribution platform and music sharing website. There are several other subscription based services like PodBean, Transistor.fm, Libsyn, Speaker, Simplecast etc.

Most of all, giving an audio-visual experience to the students could inspire them to learn and frequently follow a teacher online. Hence giving video lectures using video hosting web sites like YouTube is a great option for teachers of English language. Today, YouTube is the most popular and widely used medium to reach online audience. Using YouTube can help teachers to reach out to their students as well as followers around the globe. YouTube can easily make you an icon in your subject if you frequently add content to your channel.

Mobile learning (m-learning) is an emerging area in education. It is education using personal mobile devices, such as tablet computers and smartphones to obtain learning materials through online education mobile apps, and social interactions. It is flexible and allows students to access learning materials anywhere, anytime. Smartphones are changing the way we communicate. Messaging apps like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and Telegram can be used for academic discussions. It is a promising area, and along with the introduction of 4G technology, it will reach new heights.

The introduction of technology in education is changing the very way we approach teaching and learning. Technology is rewriting the definition of teacher and learner, and the skills they need to have. The future of educational practices is almost defined and the teachers should adopt new ways and means to meet the changing demands of time. Regarding English language teaching, the opportunities that the learners of English are getting today are entirely different from the traditional concepts on second language acquisition. The Web 2.0, MOOCs , and the gadgets and apps assisted

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teaching could support the teachers of English to make leaning more open, effective and massive, fast and user oriented.

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