

Technology, New Media & ELT

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Abstract

The threshold of new millennium is witnessing pivotal changes inducted by technology in every walk of life where the emergence of new media is redefining life-style at both the personal as well as on the professional front. ELT no longer remains an aloof and secluded teaching domain, rather day by day ELT classrooms are getting modernized and becoming more lively by the nascent technological and new media stimulants. May it be curriculum framework or teaching-learning practice, the holistic pedagogical sphere of ELT has been overhauled during last few decades. English Language Lab has already been adopted and assimilated in routine classroom practice and proving its present practical significance. Teaching Telegraph/telegram-writing are stories of yesterday; effective telephonic skills, messaging and drafting E-mails are very much in practice of present day; whereas E-Bulletins, E-Blogging will be futuristic requirements. NCOVID-19 era made it well written that ICT is not only desirable rather but has become mandatory. In such scenario it is imperative to think pragmatically of the “trichotomic-equilibrium” of ‘Technology, New Media and Language’ and adhere the same in ELT classroom practice. Through this paper the author attempts to look at ELT in the trichotomy of ‘Technology, New Media and Language’ in order to cater to the futuristic demands of Gen-Z citizens.

Key Words: Technology, New Media, Language, Generation-Z & ELT.

Introduction: Technology, New Media & ELT

If language teaching is a challenge, second language teaching is the bigger challenge. Technology complicates, whereas New Media sophisticates human sphere. The threshold of new millennium is witnessing massive changes inducted by technology in every walk of human life where the emergence of New Media is redefining the life-style of human beings at both personal as well as professional front. New Media, as catchall umbrella, encompasses all forms of communicating in the ‘digital world including publishing on CDs, DVDs and, most significantly, over the Internet’. Additionally, through New Media, users obtain the desired information and material ‘via desktop and laptop, computers, smart-phones and tablets’ instead the traditional options offered in the form of dead tree media or static print media. The very idea of New Media conceptualize “new methods of communicating in the digital world allow smaller groups of people to congregate online and share, sell and swap goods and information. It also allows more people to have a voice in their community and in the world in general.”^[1]

Vangie Beal comprehensively remarks of New Media as “a generic term for the many different forms of electronic communication that are made possible through the use of computer technology. The term is in relation to “old” media forms, such as print newspapers and magazines, that are static representations of text and graphics.” New media includes, Web Sites, streaming audio and video, chat rooms, e-mail, online communities, Web advertising, DVD and CD-ROM media, virtual reality environments, integration of digital data with the telephone, such as Internet telephony, digital cameras, mobile computing. Furthering the concept and use of New Media Vangie Beal says that use of the term new media implies that the data communication is happening between desktop and laptop computers and handhelds, such as PDAs (Personal Digital Assistant viz. Palmtop), and the media they take data from, such as compact discs and floppy disks.^[2]

Stating the Problem & Objectives

The cropping up of COVID-19 also created arenas by opening the novel vistas to ponder over nascent pedagogical reforms and the same also conclusively summed up that in order to survive, sustain and grow in present teaching-learning scenario we have to be with pace of changing times. On the sands of time, it is boldly written fact that the days are numbered when the whole academic world will be heralded by New Media and consequently, academicians will have to start looking at *E – Resources as Change Agent*.^[3] The dialogues will be centering on *Information Ethics in the Age of Information and Communication Technology*^[4] and the stakeholders of academics will have to come up collectively on the teaching-learning platform for researching and *Excavating Strategies to Bridge up The Industry–Institute Gulf in South Asian Higher Education System*^[5] as well as for the rest of the world. In such scenario, glocal (Global as well as Local) world will demand a global language to meet out the skyrocketing wishes, demands and communicative requirements of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization ‘LPG’. Undoubtedly, today, by exhibiting its coping ability and worldwide receptivity, only English has been able to establish itself as the fitful language with enough potential to cater to the emerging needs of mankind in new millennium.

Advent of ELT as Glocal Phenomena of New Millennium

Visualizing the ever-increasing wide-spreading demands and towering communicative significance of English as the global language, in one of his speeches N. Krishna Swami proclaimed aptly that:

“English has become the world’s way of communicating internationally and inter-culturally just as the Christian Calender is the world’s way of tracking time and as the Indo-Arabic numbers are the world’s way of counting.”^[6]

ELT no longer remains an aloof and secluded teaching domain, rather day by day ELT classrooms are getting modernized and becoming more lively by the nascent technological and new media stimulants. Thus, the role of ELT professional instantaneously becomes of pivotal significance in ensuring inclusive growth for all. Inclusive growth for all and holistic development of mankind cannot even be imagined in absentia of holistic education. May it be curriculum framework or teaching-learning practice, the holistic pedagogical sphere of ELT has been overhauled during last few decades. English Language Lab has already been adopted and assimilated in routine classroom practice and proving its present practical significance.

So far as ELT curriculum is concerned, teaching of telegraph/telegram-writing are stories of yesterday; effective telephonic skills, messaging and drafting E-mails, communicating on worldwide-web via virtual platforms like skype, google talks, meet, Microsoft team are very much emerging as present day practice; whereas E-Bulletins, E-Blogging will be futuristic requirements. In such scenario it is imperative to think pragmatically of the "trichotomic-equilibrium" of 'Technology, New Media and Language' and adhere the same in ELT classroom practice. This study looks at ELT in the trichotomy of 'Technology, New Media and Language' in order to cater to the futuristic demands of Gen-Z citizens.

Literature Review:

The proceedings of International Conference on *Empowering the English Language Classroom* (2013) MNIT, Jaipur aims "to focus on the emerging trends and methodologies in English Language Teaching which can empower the language classroom and make it the centre of effective language learning. It encompasses three areas of English education: teaching, practice and research." With objective to contribute significantly "to the existing research and scholarship in the area of English Language Teaching", the Volume examines the "role and significance of the language classroom in facilitating learning and instruction, modern pedagogical approaches to language learning/teaching are tasted, practiced and perfected in the classroom."^[7]

Advanced Information Communication Technology in Engineering, (2013) maintains that ICT is revolutionizing every walk of life by its ability to extend services surpassing the limitless boundaries of space and that is why every domain is having huge expectations from this. There is a lot of scope...to go in deep, conceive, imbibe, explore, excavate, and grow by sharing there well dug knowledge and constitute through their hard earned proven knowledge to restructure the struggling and faltering economy of the nation and extend there services to the futuristic generations of human civilizations. The volume aims to serve and cater to the citizens of Generation -- Y and Generation -- Z to envisaging greater cause which may enable them to serve the humanity. A paper entitled Indian Perspective of English in Rural Areas Lacks Technology discusses that English as people quit but English as language remain, survive, sustain, and grew like anything. The study ponders over the role of technology in the ensuring language learning and teaching for all. (Singh & Khrab: 595-597) ICT integrated Higher Education (Vashist et al: 619-620) accepts the technology as revolution in 21st century education system. Another study investigated the role of ICT in Empowerment of English (Dalal et al: 621-623). One more study (Deepika et al: 624-626) talks of technology, teacher and English language classroom experience for professional students.^[8]

Pondering over the fact that "The demographic, cultural, political and economic relation of English made it the most widely used language in the world and gave it the status of an international language. It is used as a mother tongue or first language (L₁) in the UK, USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In India, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, Nigeria, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and in other African Countries English is used as a second language (L₂). In South American Countries and Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, Yemen, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Germany, Switzerland, Russia and other European countries it is used as a foreign language (FL)," *Teaching of English New Dimensions* (2012) offers a repository of twenty six well researched papers on ELT covering wide range of topics intended from primary to college levels. Each paper deals with new aspect which can prove better for effective language teaching.^[9] In a study entitled *ICT Integrated in ELT Classrooms: A Panacea to tackle the Nuances of Code Mixing and Code Switching in Rural India*, S. N. Singh, Ms Allen in the book *Information and Communication Technology in ELT Prospects & Perspectives* (2012) attempt to counter the nuances of Code Mixing and Code Switching through the help of technology. The book also considers the ever increasing role of new media in present day ELT-classroom. It claims that educators from all over the world foresee a future in which digital books, hybrid mobile computers and touch-screen writing tablets will replace the text-book, chalk and blackboard, etc. It will radically shift the prospect of ICT in ELT. Editor Ashok Kr Saini believes that in information-rich societies, the use of ICT by children and young people is largely uniform and appears to develop in very similar stages, with little cross-national variation. Pioneering mobile devices will emerge and take on a great role in the way students learn. It is also estimated that smart phones will suit more like computers and vice-versa. This volume contains considerable researches drawn from worldwide. The book brilliantly gratifies the prospects and perspective of the Information & Communication Technology in ELT. Peace Ambassador and London based author Chitra Lele remarks that Advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have made significant impact on all spheres of human life, right from business to education. The use of ICT has grown rapidly over the years, especially in the domain of English Language Teaching (ELT). ICT has become one of the basic building blocks of modern education.^[10]

English Language Teaching @ World Wide Web (2011) a major volume dedicated to the role of technology in the area of ELT. Multiple papers by various researchers infer that internet is not a new thing in modern life as millions of people are using it for various purposes...More prominently, at present, it has become an integral part of education. It offers easy access to a

wide variety of information resources -- almost a virtual library. The affluent amount of resources on the internet provide gargantuan opportunities of English Language Teaching to language professionals and educators.^[11]

In his paper entitled *Teacher Development and the Teaching of English: A Practical Study in Indian Perspective*, (2012) Mohammad Shaukat Ansari observes that “Twenty first century educational scenario requires the English teacher to be facilitator; inspirer and promoter of students’ learning which may help them construct knowledge in their own way. They are highly demanded to come up and live with the expectations of the changed educational ethos in order to grow, sophisticate and refine the various the various parameters of their professional life.” He believes that teacher development is an ongoing process, and it is a cycle of identifying, solving and reflecting on problems. Targeting the intellectual upliftment and professional development of ELT professionals Mr Ansari also recommends:

For instance, reading professional and research literature or journal (both off-line and on-line) such as *TESOL Quarterly*, *ELT Journal*, *Asian EFL Journal*, *JALT Journal*, *English Teaching Forum*, *British Council English Teaching Professional (ETP) Magazine*, *IATEFL Voices*, *TESOL Arabia Perspectives*, *ELT Voices India*, *ELT Quarterly*, *The Indian Journal of English Studies*, *Language in India (on-line)*, *ELTAI Research Journal of Literature (on-line)*, etc. enable language teachers to gain awareness of what is currently happening in the fields of ELT all over the world and to construct new knowledge about teaching and conducting classroom researches.^[12]

Apart from Mr Ansari’s suggested journals, quality exposure of a few more Thomson Reuters recommended Social Science Citation indexed journals viz. *English for Specific Purposes* by Pergamon Elsevier Science Ltd (UK); *English Historical Review* by OUP, England; *English in Australia* by AATE-Australian Association of Teaching English, Australia; *English in Education* by Wiley-Blackwell, England; *English Language & Linguistics* by Cambridge University Press, England; *English Teaching-Practice and Critique* by Emerald Group Publishing Ltd., New Zealand, *English Today* by Cambridge University Press, England; *English World-Wide* by John Benjamin Publishing Company, Netherlands and many more may help enhancing the knowledge and furthering the competence level of the trainers as well as trainees.^[13]

Methodology/study:

On the rich foundation of the comprehensive literature review the study strives to filter Intellectual-Nano-Particles from random but wisely-collected-samples with an objective to reach out handful of micro-suggestive-inferential-observations by voyaging-ventures into ‘the ocean of complexity that nowadays ELT professionals are exposed to’. The study also assesses the social impact of technological development^[14] that is significantly changing the paradigm of English Studies in India in particular and world in general in the Colonial and Post-colonial Perspectives^[15]. Focusing on English Studies in India^[16] and finally aims for developing strategies to minimizing Industry Institute Gulf in India^[17] in back drop of Indian Social Discourse where instead of Class, Caste, Gender, the society seems to be categories in three segregational sects of social-digital-divide viz. High-tech, Low-tech and No-tech and Other Emerging Margins.^[18] Without bridging the gulf of this social-digital-divide the holistic concept of ‘No One Left Behind: The Role of ELT in Promoting Inclusive Growth’ for all will remain a far-fetched dream.

The data of National Spoken English Skills report, Engineers 2015-16 by Aspiring Minds, based on SVAR, India’s largest Spoken English Test reveals discouraging information of the state of spoken English capabilities in young engineers. The highlighting factors and key findings of the report are presented in the below mentioned table for the clarity of the concept and precision:

Sr. No.	Key Findings
1.	Around 3/4th engineers do not have spoken English skills required for any job in knowledge economy.
2.	97% engineers in India cannot speak English required for jobs in corporate sales/business consulting.
3.	Around 61% engineers possess grammar skills no better than a class VII student.
4.	Females score over males in written English, while males show better Spoken element.
5.	Not more than 7.1% engineers can speak English with fluency that renders speech meaningful Pronunciation and fluency are the major barriers in effective Spoken English.

Table.1.

It also highlights the level of intensity upto which their employability is affected by their spoken English skills. The press release entitled *67% Engineers in India can neither 'walk' nor 'talk' English* reveals many more alarming secrets regarding present day situation of English in professional job aspirants. The very opening of the report is as under:

“Absurd” as it may sound, but this word is not understood by 67% of the engineering population in India, pronunciation is a far cry! Aspiring Minds, world’s leading employability credentialing firm released...The National Spoken English Skills (SES) of Engineers report analyses the spoken English skills of over 30,000 engineers in India from more than 500 colleges. The study is based on SVAR, Aspiring Minds patented automated spoken English assessment tool measuring spoken English (pronunciation, fluency, etc) and listening skills and is used across the world by large global corporations to test and rate spoken English capabilities.^[19]

In order to map the present position of ELT, and bridge up the gap of existing situation and desired requirement of the training needs of Generation-Y, Generation-Z and their progeny, stakeholders of Regional English Language Office (RELO) keep offering their innovative programs such as College Writing 2.2x: Ready to improve your English writing skills and their recent one TESOL’s Electronic Village Online (EVO) 2016 that is offering training to TESOL experts and participants across the world “engage in collaborative online discussions or hands-on virtual workshops of professional and scholarly benefit. These sessions bring together participants for a longer period of time than is permitted by land-based professional development conventions and allow a fuller development of ideas than is otherwise possible”.^[20]

Findings of the Study: Reconciliation

Aptly snipping on the present global situation Professor Shyam Singh Shashi points out that “Social development are basic to the development of a happy and well-adjusted man. Those are also the forerunners of all other developments which take place in the sphere of man. But today an enigmatic situation has emerged. Scientific and technological development has surpassed the social developments.” (Shashi: xi-xiii, *Role & Responsibilities of Humanities...*) Observing that we are living in a world of technology, and the tools of technology are irresistible to the students irrespective of their age and course in one of her articles entitled Skills, Roles and Challenges of a Language Teacher in Technical Education, while talking about the present educational scenario, Omana Antony subtly suggests for effective teaching of English:

“While the society blames the technology for distraction of their students and youngsters from their responsibilities, it is high time the educationists should start exploiting this computer mania of the students for their own betterment. Many institutions install language lab for effective communication. It is good. A creative teacher should use computer and internet for ...classroom activities. Since the students are so fond of working with the computer and browsing, make them prepare the topics in the class itself using the system. Write-ups on literary people, literary works, current issues, book reviews, social or historical events, latest developments etc. Can be the topics to work upon.”^[21]

Omana Antony further accepts the nuances and accepts, in between their online assignments the students ‘may jump into face book or such other portals, but without getting angry, the teacher must bring them back to the work highlighting the time schedule’. For proper schedule slot she opines that, “each slot should be divided to introduction of the activity, gathering and organizing data and presentation. Each of these session should be strictly followed to the time slot. It would be good to have consecutive 2 or 3 periods of English on a day. One group of 25 students is the ideal number for lab sessions. The individual guidance, attention and work done can be given a better performance in the theory class.” (Antony: p-p: 293-296 *Role & Responsibilities of Humanities...*) In the volume opening paper Dr Pashupati Jha carries the discussion to the next level by analyzing comparatively the curriculum of top Indian technical institutes and of World offering language and literature courses. (Jha: p-p: 293-296 *Role & Responsibilities of Humanities...*) He analyses the MIT, situated at Cambridge, USA where Noam Chomsky has been Professor, Emeritus, teaching Linguistics and Philosophy. To quote MIT’s aim in this context:

We preserve the best of the Humanistic tradition by teaching the values of rigorous attention to individual texts, authors or forms, and are also committed to a flexible, comparative approach that can grapple with the constantly evolving cultural productions of digital age.^[22]

Thus in addition to the focus on Language Lab software like Error Terror, Study Skills Success, Sky Pronunciation Suit, Issues in English, Tense Buster, Connected Speech etc. etc., and using digital dictionaries like Franklin Merriam-Webster ELT professionals may look for the flexible amalgamation of on-spot e-blogging and in some cases online chat sessions with the learners for making the writing sessions more communicative. Furthermore, the unification of literature and language in ELT has rightly been clarified by Stephanie Vandrick when he feels that the “Language teaching is a process the aim of which differs not only from country to country and culture to culture but from individual to individual. Literature gives students information about other cultures including the culture(s) of the country where they eventually live”.^[23](Vandrick, 265)

Professionally, English as Second Language and ELT are scaling many new heights because of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization. Right from Bio-data preparation, Resume Building and professional CV documentation employability starts. Interview is another challenge to counter. As second language classroom part the need is to tackle the problem at professional footing.

Conclusion: Drawing Inferences & Recommendations

Conveying one's emotions, thoughts and desires effectively has been fourth basic needs after food, shelter and clothing. Probably the same factors have been the root cause of emergence of the human language which in future became the most powerful and pivotal tool for communicating human expressions.^[24] In a nutshell, Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization-LPG put human life on different pedestal where Nascent technological advancements have opened unseen and unheard windows to mankind that has never been possible before. New Media came as facilitator to ensure cross-ventilation and fresh fragrance to the multiplexes of newly emerging academic domains, which, otherwise, were destined to stagnate and suffocate in the clutches of traditional but static dead-tree-media. In such environment, eventually English became the pivot for spinning the fast pace of avant garde communication. "Gone are the days when classroom activities were restricted only to the eloquent oral deliberations and the use of chalk and talk methods. New teaching methods and techniques came into the fair play towards the dawn of the twenty first century where today's teaching methods and norms are changing in comparison to ancient and medieval educational system...Everywhere ICT is revolutionizing the existing patterns day by day...The successful use of LCD's, OHP's, Projectors, highly influential communication tools, advanced devices and improvised language labs, digital dictionaries are reshaping the teaching-learning environment. Industrial exposure and real life problem solving situations can make teaching-learning process more effective & intensely practical."^[25]

Introduction to new Web 2.0 technique to ELT classrooms will be another game changer. New Web 2.0 technologies and websites, such as a blog, wiki or YouTube, make new demands on learning, and they provide new supports to learning, even as they also dismantle some of the learning supports upon which education has depended in the past. If we agree that there are changes occurring across the learning ecology and, that new conceptualizations are required to use these emerging technologies, then some care should be taken to think deeply about the impacts of Web 2.0 on the processes and practices of pedagogy.^[26]

Consequently, the role of ELT trainers considerably increasing day by day and will keep increasing in near future. Their contribution and demands will be rocketing sky-high to meet out the challenges of spearheading competitiveness. Its high time to be adoptive to the trichotomic changes of 'Technology, New Media and Language'. Otherwise, the resistance to change will replace ELT professionals and in such circumstances only classroom will exist and technology will replace ELT teacher and trainers. Their role will be reduced to the sole and meager roles of ELT researchers. Last but not the least, parity with nascent emerging platforms like viz Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Team, Webex and many more is the need of the day and our ELT pedagogy also has to go hand in hand as gone are the days when Chalk and Talk used to be the only teaching tools.

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