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Trends in English Language Teaching

G. Praveen Kumar

Ph.D. Research Scholar
Department of English
Osmania University
Hyderabad, Telangana.
INDIA.

Abstract

Teaching with the technology, deals with the ICT in the language curriculum. Computers and language teaching have been going hand in hand for a long time and contributed as teaching tools in the classroom. Some teachers may be reluctant to use computer in their classrooms despite the latest advances applicable to language teaching such as specialized websites, blogs, wikis, language teaching methodology, journals. Some adults have problems in using basic computer functions such as email, search engines, and presentation software. The 21st century teachers need to integrate technology into their classroom and build the confidence to learn how to use technology in meaningful ways. Because of the proliferation of tablets and smart phones, textbooks will disappear in a few years. Even as laptop computers, interactive whiteboards and broadband internet became cheaper and more available we began to introduce them into classrooms often without adequate training. The study seeks to achieve the following adjectives :

· to develop learners' communicative competence and promote learning strategies and learner autonomy in language classrooms

· to use digital devices to assist teachers to become insightful and realistic about their own teaching

Keywords: Trends, Methods, new devices, ICT, pedagogy

SCOPE OF THE PAPER

The aim of this paper is to review technology in English learning activities and internet communication tools which are being used lately by instructors and learners Section 1: This section gives definition, background and introduction. It mainly talks about the trends in ELT using new devices which have been recently gaining significance throughout the world.

Section 2: This section presents the study of methods, materials adopted and analysis of results and discussions in the survey of English Language Trends and Practices in South East Asian Countries.

Section 3: This section gives a brief account on the review of relevant literature

Section 4: This section gives an overview of teaching vocabulary using the current trends in CALL

Section 5: This section gives conclusion

Section 1

DEFINITION

English Language Teaching Trends in English is a pursuit to find the link between language learning and content development. The underlying principle is that English should not be the end of a language programme but the means through which learners will acquire knowledge in other fields. The approach aims at not only the mastery of English and the management of ELT methods but to some extent a certain degree of specialization in some disciplines.

BACKGROUND

English teaching today came to exist in the world with the primary emphasis on its viability as a communication skill to help acquire jobs, promote business interest's or provide various forms of entertainments. The study seeks to strengthen the argument of the advocates of teaching using educational technology.

Digital literacies, new media skills, digital competences regardless of what you resolve to call them, they are now in mainstream schooling curricula around the world. Part of the core competences that constitute 21st-century skills, digital literacies are being discussed within English language teaching as well, and teachers are asking themselves exactly how to bring them into the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

In the present times, the newest trends have emerged in the field of education that have entirely changed the face of traditional system of education. These trends portray the crucial role of education sector where quality precedes quantity, with an upsurge in the adoption of technologies meeting the necessity for professional talent. The research paper deals with both methodology and materials used in language teaching. Mainly it talks about latest trends of education with specific reference to the Indian scenario, methodologies adopted, the erstwhile 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. The prevailing trends of teaching English, especially in India, lacked both in quantity and quality or may fail to obtain a universal appeal. Rigid curriculums and huge syllabi continue to threaten students who are compelled to speak regional dialect but do well in academic English.

Section 2

The paper presents an analysis of research carried out by two earlier studies that looked at dominant ELT practices in two different countries. The first study, by Richards, Tung, and Ng(1992), investigated the culture of teaching in the context of ELT in Hong Kong. The second study, by Ridwan, Renandya and Lie (1996), closely followed the design of the first study, but was done with English teachers in Indonesia. Both studies provided valuable information regarding what teachers believed to be important factors in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language.

Our present study was broader in scope, as it included a sample of English teachers from ten different countries, nine of which are in Southeast Asia (Brunei Darussalam,Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand andVietnam), and one in Northeast Asia (People's Republic of China).The following questions guided our study:

1. What is Asian English language teachers' preferred teaching methodology?

2. What are their perceptions regardingthe role of teachers in the classrooms? the role of pre-course needs assessment?the characteristics of good teachers and good learners? the causes of learners' failure to reach a high level of English proficiency?

3. What are the functions of traditional and non-traditional modes of assessment?

4. Do EFL and ESL teachers hold the same or different views with respect to the first three questions above?

Answers to numbers 1-3 above would enable us to get an idea of these Asian teachers views regarding their teaching (#1 and #2) and assessment (#3) practices. Responses to #4 would allow us to analyze the differences between EFL and ESL teachers with respect to their teaching and assessment practices. The results of this study are expected to provide useful information that will allow language practitioners as well as teacher training institutions in the region to identify areas for further investigation and analysis. We now describe the methodology of our study.

METHOD

2.1. Participants

A sample comprising a total of 212 teachers from 10 Asian countries participated in the survey. All of these teachers were natives of their countries.

Table 1 presents the breakdown of the participants by country.

Country	Number	Percent
Singapore	30	14.2
Indonesia	29	13.7
Vietnam	26	12.3
Thailand	23	10.8
Malaysia	22	10.4
Brunei	20	9.4
China	20	9.4
Laos	15	7.1
Cambodia	14	6.6
Phillipines	13	6.1
Total	212	100

Sixty-five percent of the participants were female and 35% were male. Most of them (91.5%) worked at publicly funded institutions. They taught at the primary (12.4%), secondary (56.2%), and tertiary (31.4%) levels of education. The majority (59.8%) had a BA in language education as their highest degree, with the rest holding certificates (10.5%), diplomas (13.4%), MA degree (5.7%), and doctorates (.5%). Ten percent of the participants had degrees other than in language education. The

respondents varied greatly in terms of the length of their teaching experience. The mean and median years of teaching experience were 11.6 and 10, respectively, with a standard deviation of 7.95 for the mean.

For the purpose of this study, participants from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam were considered EFL teachers and those from Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore were regarded as ESL teachers. The main criterion for separating two countries was the amount of English used in these countries.

2.2. Materials

A questionnaire comprising a combination of both closed- and open-ended question formats was used. The questionnaire had two parts: Part I asked respondents for some basic biographical data; Part II sought to find out how the respondents characterized their teaching and testing practices and what their motivations behind these practices were. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were adapted from Richards, Tung and Ng (1992) and Ridwan, Renandya and Lie(1996).

Items in Part I asked respondents to state their country of residence, sex, highest academic or professional qualifications, teaching experience, type of educational institution they taught, and the educational level of their students.

Items in Part II asked respondents to describe their teaching approaches and teaching styles; what they considered to be the qualities of a good teacher in general and the main role of the English language teacher in particular; the extent to which they had carried out needs assessments among their students; the extent to which their teaching was determined by classroom tests and national examinations; the kinds of tests they usually used and the primary functions of these tests; the extent to which they had included authentic (alternative) assessment procedures in their instruction; and what they considered to be the learning behaviours of a good language learner, as well as the factors that contributed to learners' failure to reach a high level of proficiency in English. Some of the items provided respondents with a list of options to choose from; others required respondents to evaluate items on a likert-type scale. For each item, a space was provided for respondents to write their comments.

2.3. Procedure

The survey was conducted between November 1997 and February 1998.Participants were first informed about the purpose of the study and then asked to fill out the questionnaire sincerely. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers to those who resided in Singapore and those who happened to be studying at RELC, Singapore. Colleagues and former students of RELC, Singapore helped them to collect data from those residing in other countries.

Section 3

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Teaching Styles and Approaches

When asked about their teaching approaches or methods (Item 2.1), very few(12%) respondents said that they adopted a purely structural or a completely communicative approach. On a scale of 1 to 10, (1 being completely structural and10 being completely communicative in approach) most respondents (71%) clustered around the midpoint, leaning towards the communicative end (5– 8), indicating that most used a mixture of the two approaches with a tendency to favour more communicative activities (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Teaching Method

1 = Str uctural
10 = Commu nicative
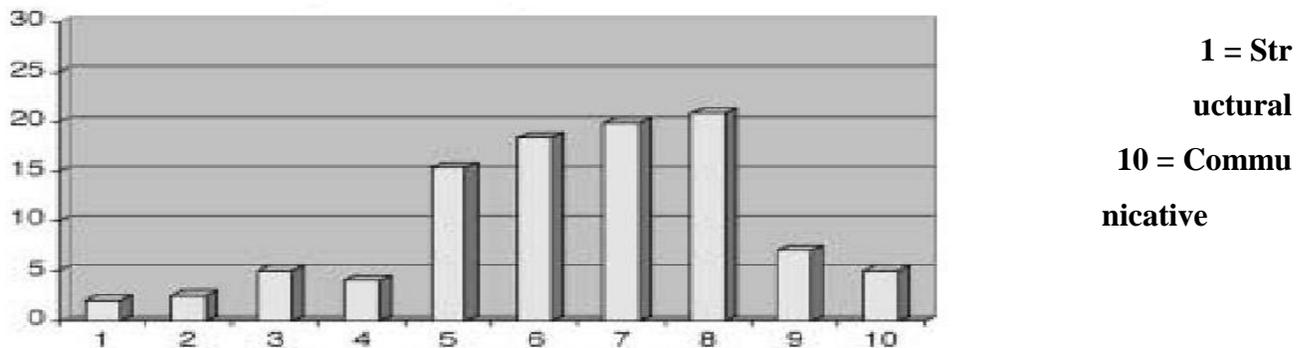
The respondents' answers to the question of whether or not their teaching tended to be teacher-centred or learner-centred (Item 2.4) showed a reported trend towards more learner-centredness. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being teacher-centred and 10 being learner-centred), 72% of the respondents lay on points 58 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Teaching Style
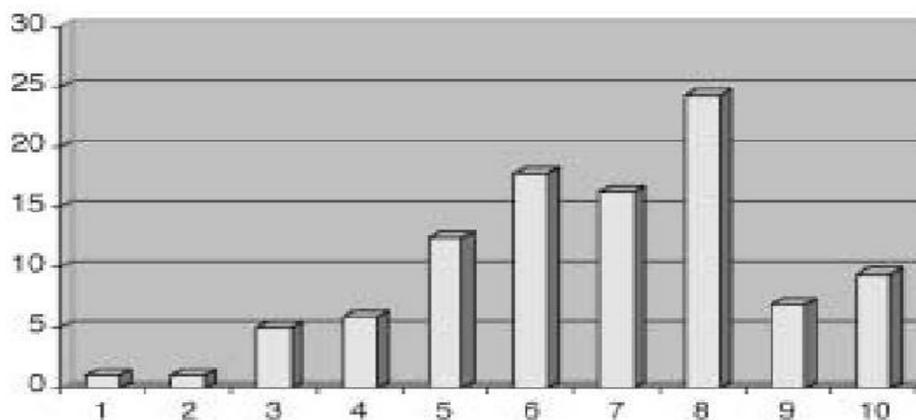
1 = Teacher-Centered   10 = Learner-Centered

Figures 1 and 2 suggest that teachers in Asian countries generally favour a more communicative approach to teaching and learning the English language. A pertinent question to ask, then, is whether the assessment procedures they use support their communicative, learner-centred classrooms, or, instead, constrain what the teachers hope to achieve through their teaching.

3.2. Recent Trends in ELT

Some of the recent trends in the ELT apparently found a foot hold while the rest are yet to make their presence felt. During the last decade, various crucial factors have jointly affected the current ideologies of teaching of English such as the ineffective methodologies, unsuitable materials, integration of contextualized teaching, over emphasis on multi language skills etc. Teachers who practiced Grammar Translation method during the previous decade solely had to rely on black board as the apt tool to impart communication skills of English language. Later on, over head projectors, acted as another medium for the teacher dominated class room. As such, audio tapes acted as medium of Audio-lingual method. In the later years of 1970"s, audio lingual method fell into disregard. In 1980"s and 1990"s, there was a sweeping change over the existing trends then and more emphasis was laid on authentic and meaningful contextualized discourse.

Several methodologists like Little Wood [1981], Richards and Rodgers [1986], Tudor [1993], Harmer [2001] have evolved different roles for a language teacher.

Richards and Rodgers conceive a teacher's role as a part of "design", component of a method. Little Wood conceptualizes the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning, an overseer, and a co-communicator with the learners. To Harmer, a teacher plays the role of a controller, organizer, promoter, participant, resource, tutor and observer. Tudor also perceives the role of a teacher in the learner centered classroom.

Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), the current paradigm is basically an off shoot of Communicative Language Teaching. Nuan (2004,12) points out "experiential learning or learning by doing" as the basic concept for the TBLT. The TBLT breaks down the barriers of the traditional classroom as the role of the learner is drastically altered. The teacher becomes a true facilitator of learning for the language learners, purely by means of dialogic communication (Vygotsky, 1978). The teacher"s role is not totally disregarded but is restricted; the teacher is expected to be a guide by the side.

The third dimension of globalization 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 learning programe and about 80% of it is in English (MC – Crum. R. et al., 1986). At the outset,the English teachers regarded internet as one of the alternative media to teach language(Warschauer,1995). The followings are some of the ICT enabled teaching activities.

ICT enabled teaching activities

Computer Assisted Language Learning is yet another manifestation of Computer Mediated Language Learning. The first phase of the CALL was conceived in 1950 and was implemented in 1960s and 1970s. In this method, the computer gives a stimulus to the learner by being not a mere tool but also a tutor.

A web based learning also called technology based learning/distance learning/on line education/e learning is one of the fastest developing areas. It provides opportunities to create well–designed, learner–centered, affordable, interactive, flexible e-learning environment (khan, 2005). There are a plethora of English web based tutorials that offer trainings for a variety of basic language skills such as Learning, Speaking, Reading and Writing and are made interactive in a variety of ways. Following are some of the common technologies available for promotion of education:

E-mail: The students can communicate with native speakers of the target language using e mail by creating email account (g-mail, yahoo, hotmail, etc) which is free. The students can mail their home work to the teachers and get the feedback. The teacher can also provide revisions, and make assessment of daily work, modifies and send back to the students.

Blogs: A blog is a personal / professional journal frequently updated for public consumption. The blogs enables to upload and link the files which are fit to serve as on line personal journals for students. Pinkman (2005) indicates blogging becomes communicative and interactive. Participants assume multiple roles in the writing process, as readers/reviewers who respond to other writers" posts, and as writers-readers who, returning to their own posts, react to criticism of their own posts. The readers in turn comment on what they read. Blogs can be placed in secured environments as well.

Skype: Every internet service has audio functions, and technological instruments like laptops with cameras. The students can communicate with their teachers and friends in faraway lands. Similarly, they could communicate well with the speakers of native language which will help them to get their pronunciation checked so as to improve their own speaking.

Mobile Phone: Learners can browse for new words using dictionary option in the mobile phones and enrich their vocabulary. They may verify the spelling, pronunciation and usage of the specific word that they are on the lookout. Moreover, they can use Short Message Service (SMS) for sending queries and for clarifications from their instructors.

Ipods: Ipods are considered to be one of the multimedia devices which enhance the users to generate, deliver, exchange texts, image, audio and video scripts as and when required. The teachers send text messages and the students can read and answer back. In addition to this, the students can record and listen to their speeches, poems, news, short stories etc. Thus, ipods give a chance to the learners of English to improve their listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar as well as writing.

The present day requirements are matched by a new age device, be it studies or social media, travel or portability. The media streaming devices like the Google chrome cast and the Rokku make group studies become interactive and presentations worth surprising and fulfilling. One has to stream the media on to a smart TV using s dongle.

Another blessing is the e–reader for the on-the-move generation. The all new- kindle paper white is a boon. Students can just tuck in the e- reader for easy reference. The portable document scanner like the Doxie Flip Cordless Flatbet Photo and notebook scanner are used to get the notes sorted. Other devices like copy and Olympus which have come with voice recorders can be utilized to record all the English lectures and be played as and when time permits. The laptop cooler like Thermapak"s Heat shift could be used to cool the laptops after long hours of use especially during the CALL sessions for those who want to share data, notes, they would very well invest on a Maxell Air Stash Wireless Flash Drive.

Task-based and Situated Language Learning and Teaching are one of the latest amongst the current day trends in ELT and utilizing these approaches in Multi-User 3d virtual environments users can have varieties of learning experiences in life-like environments. The underlying principle is that English is not the end of a language program but the means through which learners will acquire knowledge in other fields. The approach demands both the mastery of English and the management of ELT methods which require certain degree of specialization in further disciplines.

With the advent of technology, digitalization is affecting ELT resources which enable teachers and learners to connect with the outside world.

Teachers are able to develop materials in ways that would have been impossible some years ago. Almost every student now carries a powerful mini-computer, video camera and audio recorder in their pocket (otherwise known as a mobile phone) and teachers are finding new ways to use this technology in the classroom for learning English. Students now can have access to an incredible amount of English-language material online

Web tools and unprecedented access to authentic materials online help teachers to create courses tailored to the specific needs and interests of their students.

3.3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study presents the analysis on the review of relevant literature

As far as the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is concerned, In Appropriate Methodology and Social Context (1994) Adrian Holliday raises the issue as to whether techniques, pioneered in a largely western context to address the needs of local learners, should be exported uncritically to other learning-teaching contexts. It gives an ethnographic framework to explore the complex and diverse

cultures of classrooms, of student groups and teacher communities in different countries and educational environments. It goes on to argue that these factors have to be acknowledged in the design and implementation of appropriate methodologies.

In Stephen Bax's (2003) article, 'The end of CLT: a context approach to language teaching', included as an intendedly controversial item in the ELT Journal's. 'Point and Counterpoint' section, this criticism is levelled specifically against CLT. Although CLT 'has served the language teaching profession well for many years' (p. 278), Bax explains, there is now an urgent need to consider solutions to learner needs that take into account factors, 'the culture, the students, and so on', (p. 284) other than methodology. Bax portrays CLT as an approach rooted in the methodology-fixated mindset of the professional past. It is, in his opinion, now time 'to place methodology and Communicative Language Teaching where they belong — in second place — and recognize that the learning context, including learner variables, is the key factor in successful language learning' (p. 286).

As per the study conducted by Gulcin Nahegan Sarica and Nadire cavus based on their paper presented in the World Conference on Educational Sciences 2009 on the theme New trends in 21st Century English learning we can infer that Web-based English language learning tools give information as to how the teachers or instructors can make educational environment more enjoyable using internet communication tools.

The Shifting Paradigms by S. P. Dhanavel, Professor, Department of English, Anna University, Chennai, is a collection of research papers, written over two decades. Its objective is to record the developments in ELT in India from a practicing teacher's viewpoint. It traces the trajectory of English from literature-based teaching to soft skills teaching. It highlights the everyday problems in the Indian classroom and offers useful solutions for practitioners of ELT in India and abroad. Through his thought-provoking and practical techniques, the author has opened new grounds for English teaching.

Section 4

CALL and Vocabulary Teaching

CALL reflects a paradigm shift in pedagogical viewpoint from the teacher to the learners: The teaching of vocabulary must be accompanied by an active acquisition of lexis by the learners.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has been in existence ever since the computer. Vocabulary teaching has also benefited from such an approach to ELT. Empirical data have confirmed the positive impact of computer-based vocabulary teaching to learners. Plass et al. (1998) and Jones and Plass (2002) established an increase in lexical retention in students who had more access to vocabulary through computers than those who did not. Al-Seghayer (2001) reported the effects that video clips had on students' vocabulary retention. Ghadirian (2002, as cited in Read, 2004) tried to add more exposures to lexical items in a program called Text Ladder which offers students a rich lexical learning experience, though the effectiveness of the method has not been confirmed. Recently, Shahrokni (2009, as cited in Bagheri, 2012) noted that text and pictures led to better incidental learning. A study conducted by Bagheri (2012), however, pointed out the overestimation of the effect of CALL on L2 vocabulary learning.

Technology in general has been advancing rapidly more or less like a hurricane at its peak in recent years, and in particular, multimedia tools, social networks, e-learning and educational software and hardware. The learner in this day and age is exposed to various forms of multimedia, most important of which probably the internet. Furthermore, social networking and interactional platform have taken a leap of triumph in the last few years, with the bloom of Yahoo, Skype, Google +, and the most widely inhabited cyber society of Facebook (one billion active users on Facebook were reported in September 2012 in Fowler, 2012) to name a few. The internet and social networks have brought a higher chance of interaction among speakers of different languages and also provided easy access of English-based materials (news, journals, documentary programs, TV shows…), which when perceived from a pedagogical point of view, constitute a productive experience with the English language and profuse exposure to the way it is used. Furthermore, learners of English may actually engage in more L2 use while interacting online. In turn, this smoothens the path for vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning. Therefore, making use of such advancements would make for perfect implicit teaching of vocabulary.

Teaching vocabulary can be carried out through access to online websites. E-learning websites offer students with more learning during their cyber highway experience. Vocabulary can benefit from such teaching programs in the same manner described for social networking, only more focused.

A Google search of 'learn English vocabulary' produces over 20 million results which could possibly provide learners with abundant vocabulary practice. Some of the websites that assists vocabulary are :

www.bbc.co.uk,

www.ego4.com,

www.vocabulary.com,

www.vocabulary.co.il,

www.learnenglish.britishcounticl.org.

This is not to mention the more vivid source of vocabulary teaching videos on YouTube, offered by such channels as EnglishLesson4U, Linguaspectrum, JenniferESL, hellochannelenglish, Doing English…, just to name some randomly. English vocabulary learning materials are abundant and easily accessible. Utilization of such resources can greatly benefit vocabulary instruction.

Furthermore, material developers have produced both hard-back and paper-back ESL/ EFL textbooks, learning software that can be operated on a computer. Many of the current textbooks offer a CD-ROM that incorporates the inner contents and the learner can access this information via their laptops or desktops. Examples include grammars such as Oxford Learner's Grammar: Grammar Finder (Eastwood, 2005), test preparation materials such as IELTS for Academic Purposes (Mann & Taylore-Knowles, 2009) and to the point of this paper, vocabulary enhancement materials such as English Vocabulary in Use Upper Intermediate (Mark, McCarthy and O'Dell, 2006) and Vocabulary Activities (Ur, 2012).

CALL has certainly developed but it is possible that not all vocabulary software and application designers and vocabulary learning website builders possess adequate knowledge as to the principles of vocabulary teaching. Hence it is the duty of teachers to make the choice of whether to utilize such resources for their pedagogical practices or simply to stick to hand-held textbooks. Teachers can recommend their students to explore such internet-based materials themselves so that implicit teaching would include more than just the teaching of contextual guesses but of basic internet search skills as well.

Section 5

CONCLUSION

E-communication offers a wide range of networking possibilities which include special interest groups, support groups, discussion and chat rooms etc. One of this kind has been to give us access to

the experiences of many others, and to enable us to locate and also create the 'local' knowledge relates to our own needs. Since modern theories and methods are constantly changing and growing in the field of ELT. It is imperative that as teachers we should be always aware and update ourselves with best practices and benefit our students in their pursuit of acquiring English.

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