

ELT in Schools: Role of Technology in Framing Appropriate Pedagogy

SWETA SINHA, PHD

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY (JNU)
NEW DELHI, INDIA

Abstract: *ELT in modern times has become a very diverse field with respect to pedagogical experimentation as well as mode of handling the challenges lying therein. One such challenge is the increasing role of technology with a very intense impact on the performance of the learners. This is posing a challenge among the teachers who continuously work to frame new pedagogy to make ELT easy and successful. This paper presents a pilot study of ten schools highlighting the increased use of technology among the students. A new experimental pedagogical technique called 'E- description' has been suggested in the paper which can turn this challenge into a resource.*

Key words: *ELT, Pedagogy, E- description, technological framework for ELT, ELT in schools*

1. Introduction

As the wings of globalization have spread far and wide the need to learn English is being stressed upon in all the sections of society. The knowledge of English, especially its spoken form has become synonymous with modernization and globalization. It has penetrated society and mankind in every possible way and walk of life. It will not be an exaggeration to state that English has surpassed almost all other languages in popularity and variety. But with change of region and speakers the authenticity of the spoken form of the language becomes debatable.

The notion of 'authentic' language becomes problematic within a framework of English as an international language: whose words and whose culture comprise authentic language? Native speaker practices do not apply across multiple contexts of use. A more acceptable notion is 'appropriate language' but even this term needs to be examined, for what is appropriate in an international context may not be appropriate in a local context. An appropriate pedagogy should be pedagogy of both global appropriateness and local appropriation.

1.1 Education and teachers' role

Education has a potential to transform learners into political subjects to whom ethics and questions of good and bad, as well as of truth and knowledge are central. Thus, knowledge is not just a 'bank' of facts to be transmitted from the teachers to the students, but instead becomes a cognitive process undertaken by teachers and learners alike who discover how different types of information are given precedence within educational institutions. Consequently, new forms of culture and knowledge become possible. This may involve a reformulation of so called objectivity and reason in recognition that knowledge can only be partial and particular, reflecting its participants' social position.

Thus, a teacher's major role is to provide conducive learning environment. This can be achieved by being aware of the cultures of the students. In a way the teacher's culture also affects native's mind, language and performance, learning and competence. The teacher, therefore, has to understand the use of words and language, both in native and non- native language.

1.2 Technology exposure in schools

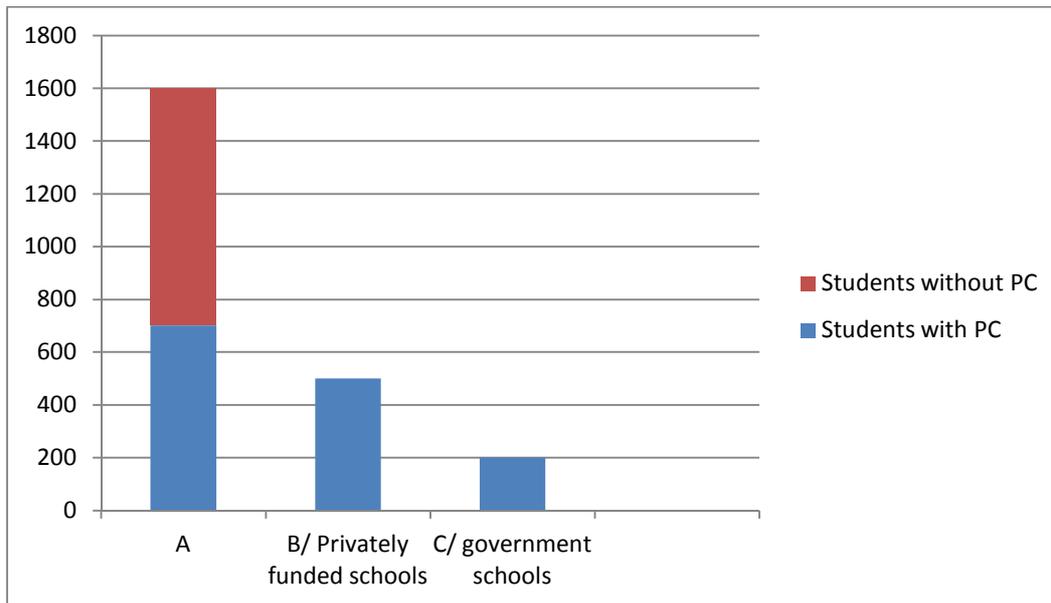
A brief reference to history reveals that the colonial past of India has contributed immensely in the superiority of English over other spoken forms. India- a melting- pot of cultures is a multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic society where English plays a tremendous unifying force. No other language can come close to English to match its popularity and diversity. The present paper is an attempt to provide an insight into the world of English language teaching and the various accelerating and retarding force that ELT specialists face at practical classroom level in schools.

Before proceeding with the paper, let us first try to establish the extent of impact that technology has in the lives of students. But who are the students that we are subjecting to the study? What are their distinguishing features? These students are highly tech- savvy especially in doing class-works and home- works. Their projection based aptitude is achieved through web facilitator. They are multi- taskers. Their retention and attention span is short but fast. They are more practical and pragmatic in comparison to teachers. They develop their theories, ideas and methods just like teachers to complete the task. They are Generation Z. Their dependence on computers and mobile phones is similar in magnitude as their dependence on food and water.

1.2.1 School Survey Report: An empirical study

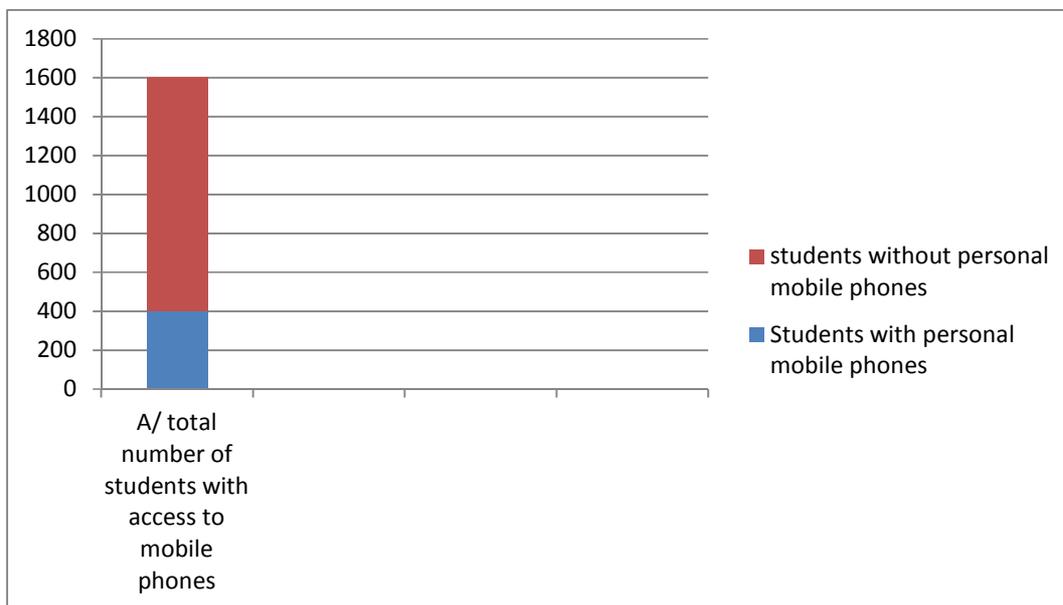
Let us first try to find out the extent of exposure that Gen Z has towards computers and mobile phones. A total of ten schools of New Delhi have been considered for the study of which five schools are run by privately funded institutions and the other five are aided by government. The students of class VII to class X make the main subject of study. Only one section of each class was chosen for the study and the strength of the class hovered around forty. This makes the size of the total population to be 1600. The total number of students having a personal computer at home is 700 out of which 500 studied in the privately funded schools and 200 studied in the government schools. 300 students of the privately funded schools and 400 students of government schools went to cyber café to access internet and computers. Approximately 200 students of government schools did not have any type of computer access. Roughly 600 students had their email ids.

If this data is represented on a column graph then we get the following representation:



(GRAPH 1.1)

Graphical representation of students with/ out PC.



(GRAPH 1.2) Graphical representation of students with/ out mobile phones.

As for the cell phones, out of the 1600 students almost everybody had access to mobile phones and around 400 had a mobile phone of their own, ie, 40 % of the total number of students.

1.3 Inference

A close study of the data reveals that technology shapes the life of Gen Z students to a very high degree and the maximum impact is seen in the kind of language that they imbibe. Since almost all the electronic gadgets sold in India have default operational instructions in English so the students catch such words very fast and they are quite conversant with their usage. They prefer reading e- books more to hard- bound books. They prefer typing their application forms to writing them down. They do not meet their friends in playgrounds rather update their status on social networking sites. They install softwares for virtually hanging out with friends. They text their friends rather than calling them up.

If such is the case then stereotypical pedagogical methods for ELT needs to be reformulated to suit their taste. The teachers need to devise non- conventional methods that would provide efficient results with this lot. One such non- conventional technique can be by promoting ‘ e- description’. ‘E- description’ or ‘electronic description’ is a method by which the students are given real life- like situations in a virtual set- up. They can be provided with pictures of a market- place or kitchen or a hospital on a computer screen and they can be asked to describe what they see in their own words either by sending text messages or by typing an e- mail. This would not only grip their attention for a longer period of time but it will also make the entire experience enjoyable.

The teachers can e- mail questions for assignments and ask for revert e- mails as answers and responses. Using such techniques the teachers can make the students believe that learning English language can be something different from the usual mundane way of holding heavy prose books and listening to unending audio- recordings or the usual and most common grammar translation methods.

1.4 Conclusion

The use of non- conventional methods will result the maximum result in the present scenario of Gen Z learners. The use of technology in ELT is the demand of modern times. Thus, social conscience and social responsibility is instilled through computer supported collaborative learning, while the teacher realizes the need of computer literacy along with the language proficiency, preference and new perceptions.

1.5 References

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