

<b>APPLYING NEW TRENDS IN DEVELOPING OUR METHODOLOGY IN ELT</b>		<b>Linguistics</b>  <b>Keywords:</b> ELT, English Language, methodology, digital age, new trends.
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**Abstract**

Learning methodology has gone through various periods in which it has evolved and complemented based on the needs of those affected by it. Language Learning, especially English, which is the most widely used language in the world, has been the focus of many experts who have continuously strived to find new ways to improve the way foreigners, but also native speakers too, learn English. In this paper, we will try to evaluate these new trends and provide enough evidence to approve the idea that new developments such as the enormous progress of Information Technologies, are having a positive effect on ELT; the main point being the continuous developments in mobile software and hardware and how all this can be blended with the traditional methodology in use nowadays in order to achieve the expected results. We will, of course, present some views that suggest some possible downsides to these new trends, in order to compare the level of their effect on developing our methodology of teaching. In focusing on detailed analysis, argumentation and comparative evaluation, we hope that this paper will provide positive insight on this important issue and that it will benefit any further research in the field of ELT.

**Introduction**

Modern-day developments in the field of ELT provide a great variety of methods and tools through which we can achieve our goals as teachers. In recent years we have witnessed a true boom in the Digital world that has paved the way for facilitating and finding ways to integrate our teaching style in the classroom. These trends more or less can be applied by any teacher who is truly interested so that what he is trying to transmit to the learners the same will be acquired, analysed and what is more important, it'll be used in the learner's life based on his needs on a given moment. New trends many times mean new issues that require solutions and finding the proper way for their application.

Fortunately, many teaching enterprises provide various courses that are designed to prepare teachers to face these issues and clarify the way for a better and more productive classroom. So, first and foremost we should find ways to prepare the teachers who will then be ready to adapt freely in the learning environment of the contemporary classroom which requires new approaches and methodology.

**Every Student is Unique**

For a learning process to be considered successful and appropriate for a given period of time it should certainly be based on the requirements of our everyday life. This is very important, because what is the need of learning something when we won't be able to use it to solve our life problems. If we take for example language learning, modern methodologies are more focused on how to use the given language in real-world environments, rather than just reading and listening to texts just for the fun of it. Taking all of this into consideration, the important thing is to provide context about the thing we are trying to learn. In the modern world, or more specifically in the

world of social networking and smartphones, learning has become easy in first sight. However, if we look more closely and start analysing these issues, we encounter things that are not quite as easy as we first thought. We say this especially if we consider the fact that digital information provides us with an uncountable number of resources from where we can get data about a certain topic. But there is a huge problem in all of this. How can we be sure that a given website is reliable and what it says is based on actual fact and research? This is a question that is hard to answer immediately because just because a website can be easily accessed, it by no means suggests that its information can be used by us for learning purposes. Hence, we come to the topic of modern methodologies in learning. As we mentioned before, at the beginning the teachers are the ones who should be trained how to detect a reliable source of information, which as we said requires particular training, and the one of the most important thing that a teacher needs to be aware of is acknowledging the fact that every student is unique and has his or her own way of learning a given lecture.

For example, in the Digital age, we know that the majority of the learning process and teacher-learner interaction is based on using computers, tablets and smartphones, equipment that a number of students may not have. This leads us to the issue of modernising the classroom with the installation of computer systems with online access where even those who don't actually own any such device, will be able to follow the lessons, always by the supervision of the teacher who will channel the students how and where to search helpful information based on the student's learning abilities.

### **Motivation**

If a teacher wants his students to fully grasp a given lesson he should always strive to find ways to motivate them as much as possible. Many researchers suggest that a good motivator, automatically is a good teacher, and a motivated learner will eventually become a good student (Ushioda, 2008).

New teaching and learning trends require using of what has been taught in the classroom, to be applied outside of it, or extending the learning process at home, playground, friend gathering, etc. (Cohen, 2011). Based on this, researchers such as Mackey, Abuhul and Gass (2012) suggest four strategies on how to use new ways in the classroom. Their example is mainly based on learning a second language, anyway, the majority of their suggestions can be applied in any other subject that is being taught. The first step is to find the proper methods to increase exposure to what we are trying to learn. Secondly, using what the learners have acquired in communication with others. Thirdly, learners need to pay attention to the lesson itself in order to grasp it as profoundly as possible and finally, using as much practice as possible to empower what the students have learned and become more reliable in their usage of that particular knowledge. The following picture provides us with what is required for each of these strategies, so they can be properly applied.



Fig. 1. The four learning strategies

### Different Views

As in every other research topic where we witness different researchers providing different facts about what they think is appropriate or not, the same can also be said in finding the proper methods to use in a given classroom.

There are researchers such as Ellis (2015) and Krashen (1985) who think that learning can be considered as something excessively implicit, meaning that the learning process involves exclusively the exposition to a large number of examples on a given issue. This view suggests that as more and more data or examples we can gather, the teacher should channel the learners to find the certain patterns which will help them understand the problem and the system of a given subject and how everything should operate inside its boundaries.

As we may expect, there are other researchers who oppose this view in stating that it is not entirely true that learners should only be provided with examples and teaching them how to differ what is important to be acquired. Abuhil and Gass (2012) state that the learning methodologies should always strive to provide the means by which learners will be able to apply what they have learned in actual circumstances. They say that learners will only be able to master the subject by communicating, at the beginning with their teacher, then with their fellow students and later, if possible, with people outside their school. This method will make them learn by comparing their knowledge with others and in that way, by detecting their errors and finding the proper solution. This methodology will make the cooperative with others and their shared experience will certainly help them overcome any possible obstacle.

All in all, finding the ideal methodology to rely on represents an ongoing process which requires various approaches and experiences in order to establish a sound base for learning.

## The Tool or the User

In any field of knowledge, people debate on whether it is the tool that is more important or the one who uses that tool. Finding the best trend in teaching a certain subject is no exception to this rule. Our age, which is considered the Age of Technology, has provided an extraordinary amount of tools that a teacher can use in order to achieve his or her goal in the teaching process. A great number of IT companies have developed many software tools that can facilitate us in the way we teach and learn. Companies such as Microsoft, Google, Apple, have continuously strived to develop software and hardware for a better classroom. Today, teachers have digital whiteboards or as we call them smartboards, use projectors, PowerPoint presentations, remote teaching, etc. All of these developments have revolutionized the teaching process.

But not always this trend has been easy to follow. New technologies develop fast and it takes time to master and apply them where there is more need for such tools. Perhaps for many new teachers things are a bit easier for the fact that they have been born in this Age and they can adapt more freely to each trend, however, more senior teachers and students also, because as we are aware, there are many elder learners who try to learn a second language for their appropriate needs, thus making it necessary to grasp this new flow of learning. In order to surpass this obstacle, the transition from the more traditional way of teaching to the newer trends is mainly done with what we call the blended teaching, which as the name suggests it blends the traditional methods of teaching and learning and by incorporating new technologies in order to make the process more accessible.

It is quite hard to imagine a person who does not use a smartphone to communicate with his relatives and friends. But such devices aren't used just for communicating about our daily issues, but also, as we mentioned previously, for teaching and learning purpose. Many teachers use what we call the digital classroom or mobile learning, which means using our mobile devices to explain a language problem, or any other problem on any other subject.

Online platforms have boomed in recent years. Websites such as Lynda, Udemy, Skillshare, etc. provide a huge amount of online lessons from certified instructors which we can access from our homes. What is very important about these platforms is the ability to chat with other learners and directly with the instructors, where we can ask questions about what we see as obscure and need clarification. These means that in one hand we learn the lecture while in another we communicate with other people in that community. This trend provides us with the means to use our knowledge about the language in interacting with peers and learn from their experiences and help others learn from our own. These platforms can be used by teachers in a more traditional classroom, by suggesting them to their students and discussing their experience using those platforms.

## Let's Play

he vast majority of those who own a smartphone have certainly played a game; someone on their free time, someone while waiting at the dentist, the other while trying to lower his or her stress. In other words, we are living in a video gaming era. It is true that humans have used games since the beginning, but what makes our age different from the past is the ability to use gaming from great distances by comparing our achievements with others. But, of course, our objective in this paper is to analyse new trends in ELT. So, the question is how can we use games to learn a language or any other subject? First and foremost, the majority of games are in English, meaning that in order for us to find our way into them and how to use them properly we must understand them. If someone is ambitious enough, he or she will certainly use a dictionary from time to time, which will probably set a trend on language learning. Another thing that requires mentioning is that there are many games that are educational and just for wasting our time... and money.

There are games about learning grammar, games about math, chemistry, biology, etc. All these games can be used in the classroom too.

Imagine how easy is for a Geography teacher to teach about countries, their capitals, distances between countries, etc., just by using Google Maps, which is installed in every smartphone that we use today. There are also many games that are developed with the same purpose, which in many ways makes the teaching and learning process a lot easier and more accessible for the students.

All of this means that we should change the presupposition that games are just time-wasters and just for kids and embrace the fact that every tool that can be used to help us achieve our lesson aims should be applied properly.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have tried to explain how to embrace the changes that the educational process is prone to face during a certain period. Teachers should always try to adapt to the new developments by learning themselves and trying to find what are the benefits of a new trend. This is very important and it should be the way we should approach something which has surfaced recently by analysing the issue and not immediately jump to the conclusion that anything new should be avoided. It should be noted that today the position of the teacher has changed, and it does not represent just a talking robot who continuously says something without paying attention if his or her students have understood anything or nothing. The modern teacher teaches for difference; the modern teacher becomes the point through which students interact. In other words, the modern teacher is the one who uses the new trends accordingly.

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