

# SHIFTING PARADIGMS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION METHODS WITH THE USE OF WEB 2.0

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## ABSTRACT

Language acquisition through natural environment has found a new dimension with the intervention of internet, then social media and now an add-on with what is now called as Web 2.0. English language acquisition methods have seen a lot of transition since the intervention of technology and internet-based methods in knowledge sharing and dissipation. The present study focuses on the observed changes in the English language learning tools used by the students studying in technical institution. The study took into account interaction with 25 students studying in engineering courses in colleges of Bhopal. The students were screened for the popular tools they use for English Language acquisition. The analysis shows that the students were strongly influenced to use participatory internet tools and social media, now popular as Web 3.0, having varied responses towards the development of speaking and writing skills.

**KEYWORDS:** Web 2.0, English Language Acquisition, Social Media, English Language Learning.

## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS WEB 2.0?

A popular internet source, Wikipedia defines, Web 2.0 as a Participative (or Participatory) and Social Web referring to World Wide Web websites that emphasize user-generated content, usability, participatory culture and interoperability for end users. The term was invented by Darcy DiNucci in 1999 and popularized several years later by Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty at the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 Conference in late 2004 (Wikipedia 2018)

The term Web 2.0 is generally associated with a specific subset of applications. Facebook, Twitter, and Wikipedia are all commonly identified as representative of the new wave of technology

while the Encyclopedia, Britannica and Microsoft Outlook are taken to portray old, outdated information tools. It may be harder to determine a comprehensive definition, but there is an "intuitive recognition" of which sites form the popular conception of Web 2.0 (Alison Hicks 2010)

### LEARNING APPROACHES SO FAR

In a developmental sequence we can consider, behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism as three dominant learning approaches that have influenced the study of learning so far. Pavlov (1897) is considered published the results of an experiment on conditioning after originally studying digestion in dogs. Watson (1913)

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launches the behavioral school of psychology, publishing an article, Psychology as the behaviorist views it. Behaviorism, is a theory of learning that bases on the idea that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning and this conditioning happens through interaction with the environment. It believes that all actions are a result of responses to environmental stimuli. Cognitivism on the other hand bases all learning as a part of mental process and internalizes it. It believes that learning happens as a part of how people perceive, think and analyses things. Constructivism, which is a step ahead to these to these theories of learning, furthers to relating learning to experiences. It makes observation and scientific study the basis of learning.

### **LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES**

Deepak K. Samida in his article titled, "Language Learning strategies", speaks of Direct and Indirect Language Learning strategies whereby he also asserts that a combination of both is required for development of effective language learning skills. He incorporates that Oxford mentions 62 language learning strategies. (Samida 2012), The article, 'The twenty-first century landscape of Language learning strategies', by Carol Griffiths, Fatih University, Istanbul, Turkey and Rebecca I. Oxford, oxford Associates, Huntsville, Alabama, USA, provides an introduction to the state of the art of language learning strategies in the twenty-first century-a panoramic view of the international landscape of strategies. In the landscape are eight key areas of controversy and discussion: strategy definitions, strategies and proficiency, theoretical underpinnings, categorization, context, teachability, research methodology, and analysis (Xodabande 2019)

The article states in its conclusion;

"Self-regulation might look somewhat different in diverse parts of the globe, largely because of educational systems influenced by contrasting cultural values, but there is hope that researchers

from varied cultures will make real effort to learn from each other. An example of international sharing is the May, 2014 conference in Graz, Austria called "Matters of the Mind: Psychology of Language Learning."

This worldwide research forum includes topics such as autonomy (related to self-regulation), learning strategies, metacognition, and individual differences and offers the possibility of global cross-fertilization of ideas. A new strand of research is focused on strategic learners' peak experiences, hot cognition, and resilience in socio-cultural context. This strand, initiated by the present article's second author, is part of the Graz conference. (Xodabande 2019) It can be clearly understood that the interactivity of various cultural and social learning patterns is a predicted mechanism of language learning strategies, which also includes English Language Learning techniques. Placing Web 2.0 in the same light clearly paves way for the use of more interactive, participatory and more globalized tools for the language acquisition process. Another study done on Iranian students who were learning English brought in significant results. A group of 30 Persian speaking students were administered for learning English pronunciation over a social networking site Telegram®. The paper titled-'The effectiveness of social media network telegram in teaching English language pronunciation to Iranian EFL learners' by Ismail Xodabande states;

"The results of pre-test and post-test revealed that the pronunciation of participants in experimental group improved significantly compared to control group but we found no significant improvement in pronunciation of participants in experimental group from post-test to delayed test which was administered four weeks later. The results of current study revealed that using social media networks in teaching language features can be very effective and promising" (Xodabande 2019)

## **METHODOLOGY**

Since the process of learning has a counterpart of teaching, the study took into account opinions of teachers as well as students on the language acquisition methods. The respondents; teachers and students were explained about the general definition of Web 2.0, whereby social media, blogs, and all sorts of interactive and participatory attributes of internet were accommodated under the aegis of the term Web 2.0. The study was done on responses received from 53 students studying in a technical institution and 6 teachers involved in delivering English Language training to the students at undergraduate level. The questionnaire was prepared through Google Forms feature of Google Technologies and the respective graphical representations were generated using the same application. The student participants were approached through email and had voluntary participation. The students were from different regional backgrounds who were in a process of acquiring technical education with English as a medium of instructions. The students have a twofold necessity towards their quest for learning English; one to understand the technical subject matter and the second to develop communicative English to enable them to have job placements after the completion of the course. The students were asked the following combination of closed-ended and multiple-choice questions to allow subjective analysis:

1. Do you use English in any form?
2. How did you learn English?
3. In which language do your teachers teach?
4. Do the teachers use Web 2.0 based study material for teaching English in class?
5. Do you receive any assignments that make you use Web 2.0.?
6. Do you use Web 2.0 for learning English Language?
7. If yes, what do you use it for?

8. Do you think Web 2.0 has made English Language learning Easy?
9. What aspects of English Language learning over Web 2.0, do you find interesting to use?
10. Do you think learning English from Web 2.0 can replace the classroom teaching-learning method completely?
11. How do you use the available Web 2.0 components for learning English Language?

The teachers were asked open ended questions pertaining to their say about the language acquisition processes in the modern-day teaching learning process. The questions asked were as follows:

1. What change have you observed in the English Language learning methods in recent times?
2. What according to you is more effective way of learning English; traditional classroom methods or internet based participatory methods?
3. How often do you use any interactive or participatory site or social media site to deliver lessons of English Language Skills?

The responses were evaluated for the frequency of similar terms used in order to develop understanding of the trend. The responses were assessed qualitatively in light of the concept of Web 2.0 and the usability and the factors that influenced such use.

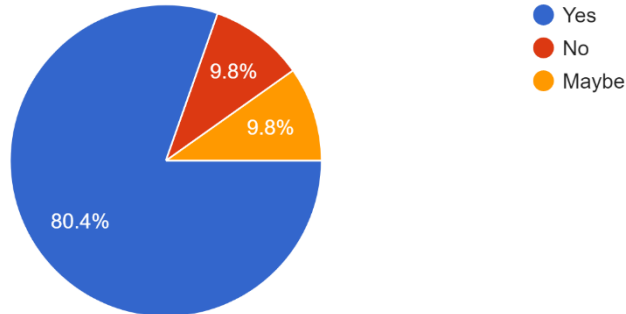
## **PRESENTATION OF DATA**

The responses were received through the Google forms and the data has been graphically converted through the spreadsheet generated by the Google forms. 84.9 % of respondents accepted that they learn English using Web based material and about 80% of total respondents expressed that their teachers used Web based teaching-learning material in classroom teaching.

**EXHIBIT 3.1**

Do the teachers use web based study material for teaching in class?

51 responses

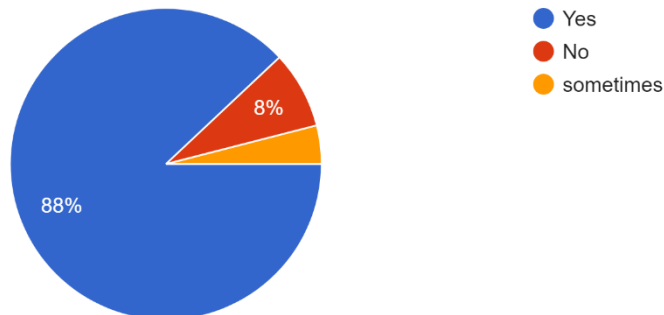


88 % student respondents said that they make use of Web 2.0 for doing their subject assignments.

**EXHIBIT 3.2**

Do you receive any assignments that make you use world wide web?

50 responses

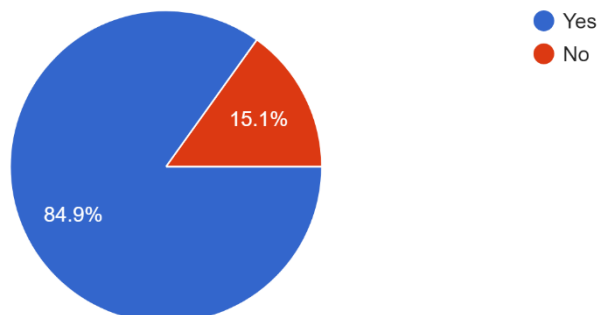


About 85 % of the total student respondents accepted that they use internet for learning English language.

**EXHIBIT 3.3**

Do you use Web for learning English Language?

53 responses



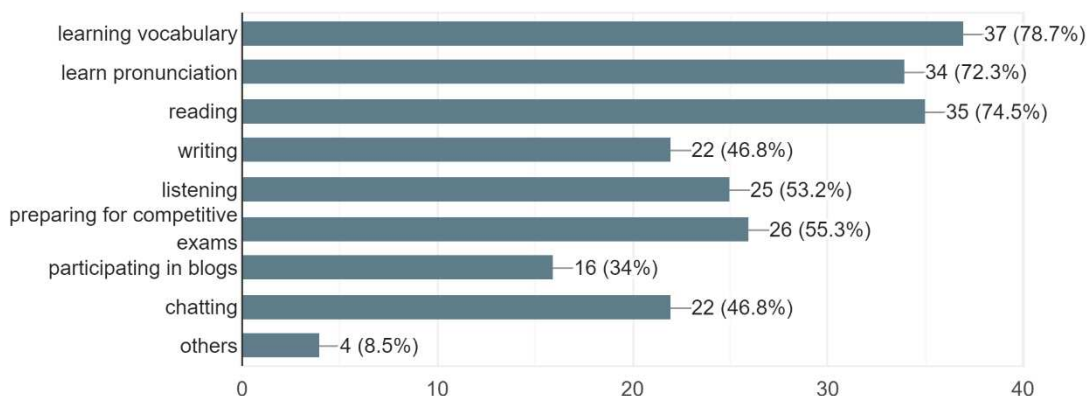
About 79 % of these students who use internet for learning English said they use it for learning vocabulary, and about the same, 72 % used it for learning pronunciation. 75% of student respondents used it for developing Reading skills and 47 % used it for developing writing skills. 53 % respondent students also agreed that they use

internet for developing Listening skills. About 55 % respondent students used internet for preparing for competitive exams, while 34 % participated in blogging activities. About 47 % used it for chatting as per the responses received in the questionnaire.

**EXHIBIT 3.4**

**If yes, what do you use it for?**

47 responses



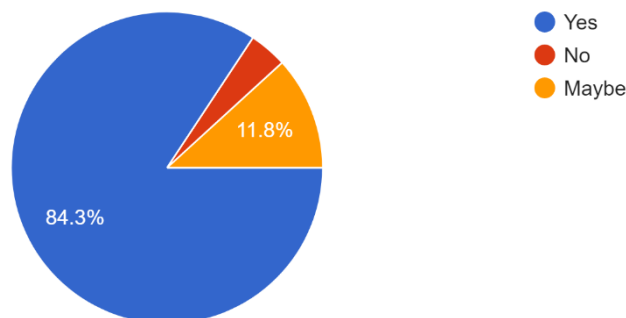
Having questioned if the use of Web has eased the process of learning English, about 84% of

respondents said they believed that use of internet did make learning English easier.

**EXHIBIT 3.5**

**Do you think Web has made English language learning easy?**

51 responses



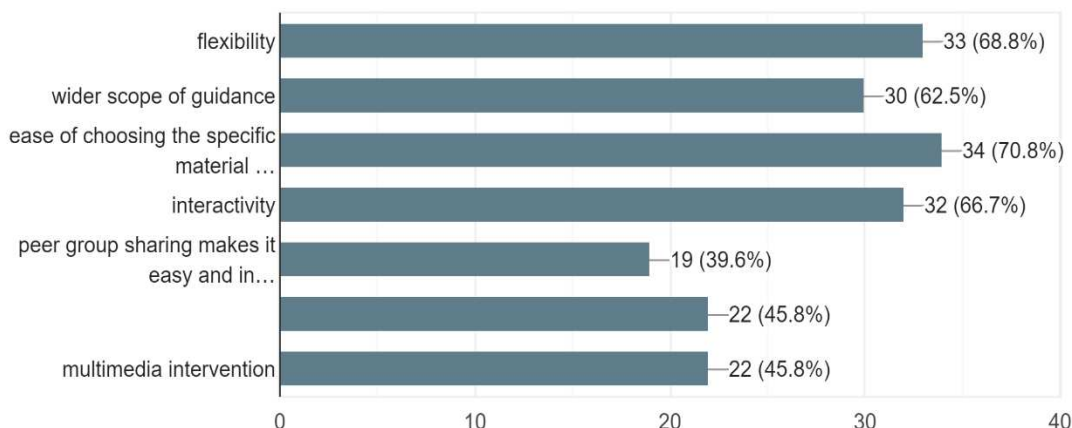
About 69 % of the total respondents found flexibility aspect of learning over internet interesting to use, while 63% felt that it increased the scope of guidance. 71 % of the said group of student respondents felt that Web provided them ease of access to specific material for study

while the same percentile felt that interactivity was an appealing factor. 40% felt that peer group sharing made learning over internet interesting, 46% found the multimedia appeal of internet based learning material as an interesting aspect.

**EXHIBIT 3.6**

What aspects of English language learning over Web, do you find interesting to use?

48 responses



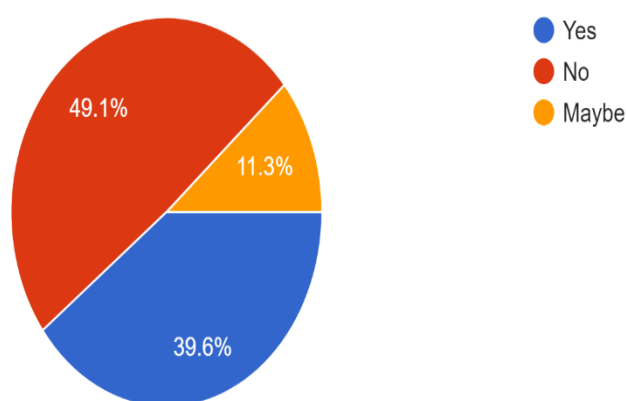
The study questioned the students if they believed that Web based teaching methods would be able to substitute the classroom

teaching. A wide majority of 49% said 'No', while 40% said 'Yes'.

**EXHIBIT 3.7**

Do you think learning English from Web can replace the classroom teaching-learning method completely?

53 responses



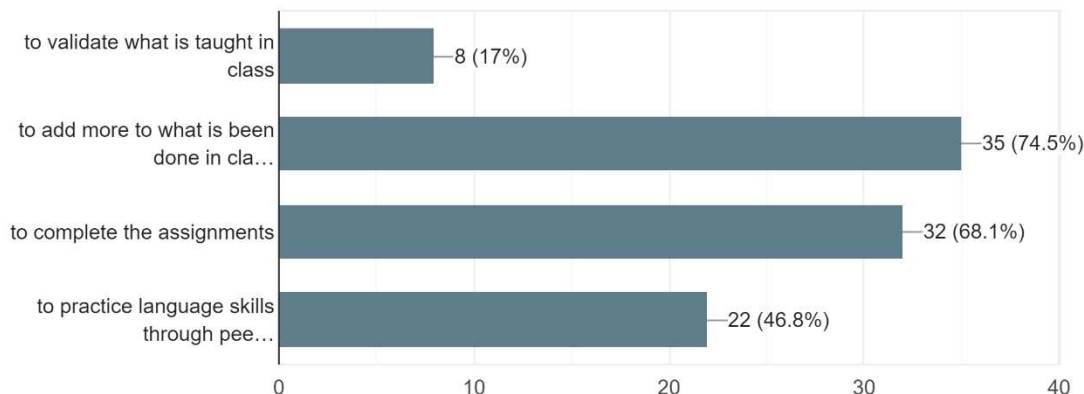
Out of those who use Web 2.0 for learning English language, it was asked 'How do you use the available content to learn English?' 17% said they sought validation for what was being taught in class over internet, 75% tried to supplement to

what was being taught in class, and thereby used Web 2.0 as an add-on tool. 68% said that they used the services of Web 2.0 for completing assignments. 47% said they used Web 2.0 for practicing lessons with the peer group.

**EXHIBIT 3.8**

### How do you use the available web components for learning English Language?

47 responses



### INFERENCE AND ANALYSIS

It can be clearly seen from the presented data that the students actively depended on Web 2.0 as a resource for learning and do see it as a tool for supplementing the English language learning received in the classroom. It can also be seen that though the use of Web 2.0 has become widespread, yet the role of classroom learning is not ruled out. Infact, it remains a strong assertion as accepted by a vast majority. The underlying aspects of overall shift in English Language acquisition process can be clearly seen as the students accept the use of Web 2.0 material for different reasons and accept that it is a source for supplementing the learning received in the class.

The responses received from the teachers also reflected a pattern in openness toward the use of Web 2.0 based participatory material in English Language acquisition process. The teachers opined that the role of Web 2.0 in teaching cannot be ruled out altogether. The students find it convenient to use the facility of Web 2.0, which is available anywhere and at any time. The teachers also found this as a tool to keep the teachers technology ready as the validation of whatever they taught in the classroom may be tested immediately. Therefore, the change from a

non-Web 2.0 based English learning to Web 2.0based learning has not only put the students at comfort but has also made teachers a sort of active learners at all times.

On discussion with the students it was realized that the use of internet-based language acquisition methods was dependent on; firstly; the mobile phones having internet connectivity and secondly on the instances that forced the students to learn through these resources. The teachers agreed that the traditional classrooms are changing at a fast pace to accommodate a more resourced and dynamic Web 2.0 based interactive learning strategies. The teachers were interested in using the English Language resources available over Web 2.0 for developing interactive assignments and to ease the students of the burden of skimming book by book for a specific piece of information. Most teachers held an opinion that the English language skills would have a varied impact due to this change brought about Web 2.0 2.0 in the English Language acquisition. It was shared by the teachers that this change would further diminish the importance of writing as a skill as a lot of applications and tools are available at a mouse click to help the students deliver the desired structures in English. They also shared the fear

that the Grammar learning shall also have a great impact as the syntax is not emphasized much on the language used over the social media sites and blogs.

The students were found to be adapted to the concept of referring to English Language learning material and resources available on Web 2.0 2.0, however, the use was dependent on the frequency of the need to look for a specific information or concept.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study reflected clear influence of Web 2.0 on the English Language acquisition methods used by the young learners of technical courses. The shift in paradigms of learning can be clearly observed as the learners are no longer completely dependent on the classroom-based methods. The learners have become more explorative towards instantly available resources for reference purpose and like to use self-paced learning strategies. The use also predicts the future classrooms to find more space for participatory or interactive tools to enhance learning experience and make it more user friendly. This has also changed the way we would look at the end user, learner, in this process, who would be a strong controlling factor in the

language acquisition instead of the passive role exercised earlier. It can be predicted that with the pace at which the English Language learning is becoming handy for the students the facets of English Language learning interactions would eventually change with a more active learner and the role of teacher shall transform into a guide to dexterous use of this huge unrestricted resource.

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