

# Technology Integrated English Language Learning: A Case Study

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**Abstract**—*The scenario of teaching and learning has been witnessing continuous changes in last two decades. The phrase “e-Learning” or “Technology in Education” has become the buzz word in every educational environment. Education is now becoming interesting and easy with the advent of new trends in teaching and learning practices. Technology integrated English Language learning provides a support system that could help in transacting the English Curriculum with ease. In the past, no productive, creative and constructive activity was given to the learners to develop the four language skills. These new trends have given way to the productive skills of learners and lead to the all-round development of the students by providing in a communicative situation where teachers and learners are not only involved in an interaction but also primes to better understanding and a sense of wholeness through creative thinking.*

*The present paper is comparative analysis between technologies as a tool of learning English as a subject verses traditional way of learning English among the technical students. A report is prepared to showcase the survey conducted among the technical students in order to get an insight into their learning abilities and subsequently how this survey could pave a path for the teachers to adopt best teaching practices in classrooms and labs.*

*(LSRW=Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing)*

**Keywords:** *e-learning, communication, LSRW, technology, English curriculum.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English is an advance language and universally prominent for its command of expression and varied literature. For a native learner, it is easy to learn their language. However, the students of other languages need many efforts to learn a foreign language. The learners in India also face such problems because English is not their mother-tongue. They have to put lots of constant efforts for learning English as a foreign language. To solve these problems, a systematic approach is to be followed, and teachers should aim to teach the English language as a skill. For creating awareness and appreciating the language activities, Teachers have to work on the creative approach which supports students to boost their confidence in all spheres of life. This new approach will not

only increase the standard of learning in the classroom but also discards the image of teacher as merely a subjective distributor of all knowledge. Technology integrated English Language learning provides a support system that could help in transacting the English Curriculum with ease. In the past, no productive, creative and constructive activity was given to the learners to develop the four language skills. These new trends have given way to the productive skills of learners and lead to the all-round development of the students by providing in a communicative situation where teachers and learners are not only involved in an interaction but also primes to better understanding and a sense of wholeness through creative thinking.

With the advent of technology and science in the process of teaching and learning, the terms ‘blended learning’, ‘hybrid learning’ and ‘online learning’ has become a buzz of this era. This technology integrated teaching-learning has made the process handier and learning oriented. Though the traditional methods are no less efficient in terms of knowledge platform but the incorporation of technology has made the job of teachers more approachable to the students. The biggest advantage of this online learning is that it is much more flexible, adaptable and learning-oriented. According to the book, ‘Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation’ edited by Brian Tomlinson and Claire Whittaker the term blended learning originated in the business world in connection with corporate training (Sharma and Barrett, 2007), then was employed in higher education (MacDonald, 2006) and lastly it appeared in language teaching and learning.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Over the past two decades, the use of technology for learning foreign language has been expanded promptly. It has been reported that the advent of new technology has a positive influence on both learners and teachers (Mansor 2001). Researchers (Friggard 2002; Miner 2004; Timucin 2006) have demonstrated that technology boosts the development of teaching methods as well as students’ knowledge (Mohammad

Javad Riasati 2012). Technological innovations have gone hand in hand with the growth of English and are changing the way in which we communicate (Solanki D. Shyamlee 2012). Technology is an amazing tool to provide opportunities for English language learners to interact with peers in class as well as the real-life audience outside of classrooms, cities, or even worldwide (Dukes, 2005; Nan Li 2013). Technology offers opportunities for teachers to accomplish the educational goals. As school diversity increases, the challenge for teachers also increases. It is thus crucial that educators continue exploring and acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of English language learners and all students (Nan Li 2013). According to Maria Andrade April 2014, technology is an excellent resource for giving students the chance to practice English skills without worrying about the response of other classmates, or even the teacher. Technology integration is shown to be effective in all age groups and is also shown to be helpful for students with special learning needs. To reiterate, technology integration has the following benefits: 1) increased student motivation; 2) increased student engagement; 3) increased student collaboration; 4, increased hands-on learning opportunities; 5) allows for learning at all levels; 6) increased confidence in students, and 6) increased technology skills ( Kevin C. Costley 2014).

The course of English communication focuses on the development of students' language & communication skills, critical thinking, and problem solving skills through the understanding of 4 pillars of English Language i.e., LSRW ( Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing). The course has been designed in such a manner that it also make the students appreciate the nuances of technical communication along with a brushing up of their English grammar. Students also be assessed on their presentation skills (using various technological tools, ability to work in a team and present their work with technical conviction). The complete course is divided into three components: 1). Technical Communication TC 2). Grammar, G+ 3). Language Workshop. The initiative has been taken to teach all the three components through online interface and with technical aid. TC and G+ has been taught online i.e., on Blackboard. On the other hand Language workshops have been kept on face-to-face interface but with technical aid. The lab is equipped with LAN and lab software which makes the teaching-learning task more interesting and interacting. English Grammar and nuances of this language are taught in technology-aided classrooms called language laboratories. The four skills of communication LSRW are taught with the aid of systems and the software installed. All the systems of students are connected with the Master system through software /LAN and varioys activities are played. The most interesting activity of the labs is 'Ear-training' in which the listening skills of the student are enhanced. The students are sensitized about the importance of listening and differentiate between mere hearing and careful listening through planed audios played and listened through headphones. Through this activity divided into several stages,

the students are made aware of different accents, pronunciations, homonyms, vocabulary, articulation of speech and other aspects of English language.

Apart from this other very interesting activities are designed to enhance the confidence and discover the true self of one's personality and this also accomplished with technological aid.

### 3. METHODOLOGY:

Various programs based on English Language with latest trends and tools have been incorporated to provide students an English learning environment with the objective of applying the language students to communicate and nurture language competence. The objective of the program is to improve English LSRW through various activities provided online. This study intends to explore viewpoints of the participants regarding the integration of technology tools in English language learning activities. This study is descriptive in its kind which illustrates the results of survey and course overview of B.Tech students with special reference to the subject English communication. After the survey discussed, effective English communication teaching learning techniques and pedagogy has been discussed in order to bring out the best results.

Five C's taken into consideration while incorporating ICT/technology driven activities for the students:

1. Communication
2. Clarity
3. Connectivity
4. Cross-cultural connect
5. Cognitive approach and comparative study

Through these technical tools, the students are enabled to hold command over the four skills of communication-LSRW.

Learning Management systems							
Open Source				Proprietary			
Sakai	Claroline	Canvas	Moodle	Blackboard	Docebo	Desire2learn	CERTPOINT

Fig: 1.1

### Introduction to the Learning Management System

There is variety of platforms and apps that are available and is often used by Universities is an LMS or Learning Management System. LMS (Learning Management System): a system used in business and educational settings to deliver online courses and instructor-led courses. It is a software application designed to help facilitate the administrative portion of online learning experiences. An LMS also may be

referred to as a Course Management System (CMS) or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). (See Fig.no. 1.1)

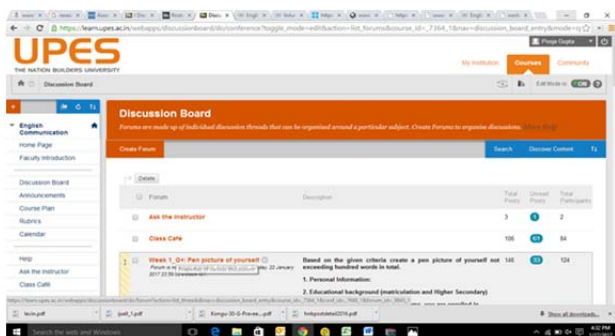
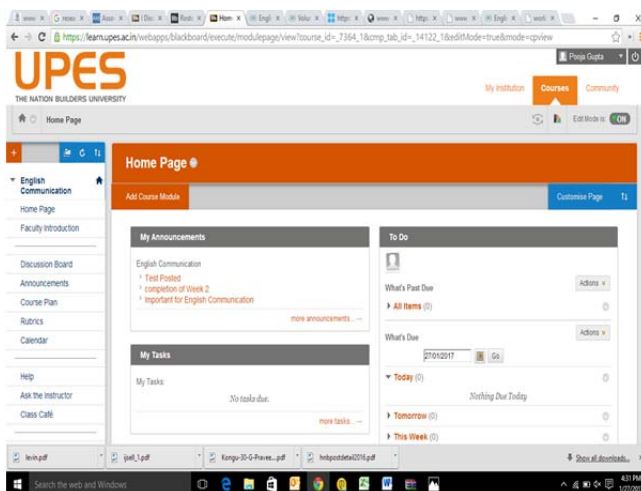
There are two kinds of LMSs: proprietary and open source. An example of a proprietary (for profit) LMS is “Blackboard”, one of the most widely used LMS platforms in the world and we have used this one for online learning. A similarly common open source LMS would be Moodle. Open source means it is a free platform that can be added to and enhanced; as a result, it is a constantly evolving application. In addition to these example LMS, there are many other LMS options and a large variety of web-based applications that serve the same purpose.

Despite a variety of LMS available the functions if all these are almost same. They facilitate quick communication, wide sharing, documents, study material, prompt evaluation and assessment.

One of the tools we use in Blackboard is Webinars-in which guest-lectures by international delegates/lecturers/speakers are conducted for the students ultimately giving global exposure to various international accents, vocabulary, articulation of speech and at the same time making the students more acceptable, adaptable and flexible attitude.

These activities give exposure to multilingual communication at home from around the world.

These are some of the pictures of Blackboard:



## Survey:

Participants, members/Students involved in the case study:  
Class: B.Tech I/II sem

This study is based on the feedback and output based-course overview received from B.Tech I year students and the instructor involved with them. The participants involved were from different background and with different level of knowledge of internet and technology. The instructor designed various activities as a part of their online curriculum (English: Technical Communication & Grammar).

## Activities designed online with communication tools:

Blended activities: Students were involved in various activities in various face to face and online activities. For online study the components given to the students are Technical communication and Grammar on Learning Management Systems (LMS) which have a variety of functions or tools that support the learning process in a better way. There are different Learning Management systems available across the world with the tools provided and these tools provide direct support for communication in the online course.

The following list provides basic communication tools used in an LMS:

Announcements: This tool of the LMS allows all members of a course to find announcements from the institution and instructor. Depending on your LMS, there are different ways in which it can be accessed while logged in, including the default home page. In some LMS, announcements are organized and displayed by Institution, Courses and Organizations, and All Course announcements.

1. Discussion Board: The Discussion Board is tool that allows students and the instructor to share information. In most LMS, students can access Discussion forums through a main Discussion board page or through a link or page located in an individual week or module. Each forum may have a specific topic or theme, based on a course member's posting (known as a "thread."). Posts then can be made accessible to all students allowing instructors to act as moderators of the discussion boards. For collaborative purposes, most LMS systems allow small groups to have their own Discussion boards.
2. Email: Email within an LMS allows the exchange of private and group messages without having to access external email servers, such as gmail.
3. Virtual Forums: Similar to a Discussion forum, virtual forums allow students and instructors to synchronously share information. In order to enhance the use of this tool, instructors are encouraged to set up virtual office hours, where they attend the virtual forum at specified times. This will provide students the opportunity to ask specific questions and gain clarity or to share insights gained regarding course content.

Questions asked to the students after the course was completed:

What did you like the best about the delivery of this course?

1. The course is delivered very well by our ma'am. Mistakes committed by us are caught in this Discussion board and with practice, we learnt to correct.
2. The weekly division of the course is very well. The weekly distribution of the course and the discussions are given in a very good format.
3. We enjoyed IDI activity and learnt new tools.
4. Regular learning.
5. Continuous evaluation.
6. Quality resources.
7. Better learning and understanding.
8. This course is full of resources which you can have access to and they teach you a lot.
9. Course was good and helpful. We experienced learning from this course from every student as everyone was thinking differently in the same topic so we get to learn many things by this online course as every students thinking was different about same topic and it was nice course.
10. I liked the online discussions a lot.
11. This course provides great increment in the confidence level, this also taught a great lesson.
12. The concept and understanding of everything was filtered in a very good way. The best thing was that for every test we were even practice session to get an overall idea.

Ques. 2: What did you dislike about the delivery of this course?

1. I dislike the time limits in tests
2. Nothing
3. Sometimes I cannot understand it properly
4. Marks deducted because of case sensitive reasons.
5. Less reading materials.
6. Difficulty level needs to be increased.

Question 3. You received continuous feedback about the progress of your learning of this course

Answers	No. of students
Agree	66
Can't say	7
Disagree	6
Strongly agree	20

Question 4. Rate your overall experience of this online course on a scale of 1-10.

Points	no. of students
<b>10 points Extremely good</b>	<b>19</b>
9	17
8	21
7	23
6	09
5	08
4	02
3	02
2-1	03

Rubrics of assignments and discussion is displayed in the figure

Below:

Criteria	Exemplary (20)	Accomplished (19-14)	Average (13-8)	Developing (7-2)	Needs Work(1-0)
Content	Exemplary understanding of the concepts	Accomplished understanding and correct use of the concepts.	A general understanding and correct use of the concepts.	A minimal understanding and correct use of the concepts	No understanding or correct use of the concept/ no submission
Task	It works as an exemplary for others	It includes all components required	It includes most components required	It includes some components required	It is missing a critical component./no submission
Expression	It is clear, coherent, well-organized with appropriate language	It is clear and easy to understand ,uses appropriate language	It is not consistently clear and easy to understand, uses inappropriate language.	It is unclear or difficult to understand, minimally acceptable language.	It is unclear and difficult to understand,uses inappropriate language . No submission

Advantages framed after getting the feedback of the students and the inputs of instructors.

1. While posting the discussion/assignments the students could not just copy and paste the content from resources available like books/google/Wikipedia because of anti-plagiarism tool embedded in the activities designed. This particular Tool actually has proved to be an alarm bell for

the students to adopt original and creative approach to write their assignments/discussions. This has lowered down the plagiarism and eventually helped the evaluation process by the instructor to be more transparent and easier.

2. Rubrics were framed for each activity and are visible to the students while they open the discussion/assignment/blog so that they have the clear idea of the expectations of the instructor and the parameters on the basis of which their posts would be evaluated. This has brought more transparency in understanding the evaluation process and as well as in understanding the weak areas of the students. Ultimately this has enabled the students to recognize their weak areas and providing scope for improvement.
3. Students can see the posts of other students/batchmates and have the option to give critical comments as well. This broadens the exposure of the students to their batchmates and could compare their responses.
4. Learners are more exposed to the world of internet through online encyclopedia/Wikipedia which expands their scope of research before submitting their own write-up. In case of any query or doubt they can raise their questions on 'Ask the instructor' or 'class-café' and could get the solution from their peers and instructor. These open forums have enabled the students to enhance their probing skills and problem solving skills to analyze and club information from various resources.

Mistakes committed by the students identified:

- Typo mistakes due to carelessness.
- Wrong sentence-framing.
- Usage of slangs, 'U' instead of 'you'. "Howz" instead of 'How is', '2k' instead of 'took', infmrd instead of 'informed'.
- 'b' instead of 'be'. Use of casual language.
- Grammatical errors/Punctuation errors.
- Personal comments sometimes.
- Poor internet connectivity.
- Repetition of ideas/poor ideas.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study explores student opinions and attitudes toward Online/Blended English language learning. During the course initial implementation, some students found difficulties for adopting new methods of teaching and learning practices; they preferred a traditional, spoon-fed, lecturing style of learning and did not make the required effort to benefit from technology integrated learning. While some of the students

enjoyed innovative, high-tech learning. They experience new technologies, feel the pleasure of learning and increase their learning opportunities. With technology integrated courses, students improved in the knowledge of computers and other fields. It also developed their learning abilities, expanded their interests and broadened learning range and possibilities. Most of the students were enthusiastic about the course regarding adopting new technologies that promote and enhance language learning by blending online and face to face communications tools, given appropriate design and proper functioning. Technology integrated English language learning will be more

student-centered but less time-consuming. Therefore, it promises that the teaching quality will be improved and students' applied English skill scan is effectively cultivated, meaning that students' communicative competence will be further developed. In conclusion, we believe that this process can fully improve students' practical language skills, which is helpful and useful to ensure and fulfill an effective result of teaching and learning.

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