Differential Approach to Technology Aided English Language Teaching: A Case Study in a Multilingual Setting

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Abstract : Rapid evolution of technology has changed language pedagogy as well as perspectives on language use, leading to strategic changes in discourse studies. We are now firmly embedded in a time when digital technologies have become an integral part of our daily lives. This has led to generalized approaches to English Language Teaching (ELT) which has raised two-pronged concerns in linguistically diverse settings: a) the diverse linguistic background of the learner might interfere/intervene with the learning process and b) the differential level of already acquired knowledge of target language might make the classroom practices too easy or too difficult for the target group of learners. ELT needs a more systematic and differential pedagogical approach for greater efficiency and accuracy. The present research analyses the need of identifying learner groups based on different levels of target language proficiency based on a longitudinal study done on 150 undergraduate students. The learners were divided into five groups based on their performance on a twenty point scale in Listening Speaking Reading and Writing (LSRW). The groups were then subjected to varying durations of technology aided language learning sessions and their performance was recorded again on the same scale. Identifying groups and introducing differential teaching and learning strategies led to better results compared to generalized teaching strategies. Language teaching includes different aspects: the organizational, the technological, the sociological, the psychological, the pedagogical and the linguistic. And a facilitator must account for all these aspects in a carefully devised differential approach meeting the challenge of learner diversity. Apart from the justification of the formation of differential groups the paper attempts to devise framework to account for all these aspects in order to make ELT in multilingual setting much more effective.