

Realigning English Language Teaching and Assessment through Pedagogy, Technology, and Purpose

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Abstract

“Tobeornottobe” has always been the question; for scientists, educationists, philanthropists, and the like. Even in the domain ofELT (English Language Teaching), whether teachers can be good assessors, whether students themselves should be given the liberty for peer evaluation, whether technology can become an aid to assess – these are some of the most pertinent questions that concern both teachers and students in the 21st century. ELT experts have diverse opinions on these issues and so, one also has a plethora of theories to validate from. However, what truly matters for an English teacher is the curation of a distinct class room experience that matches with the expectations of her learners. This classroom experience is indeed a composite whole of learner-centric pedagogies that have the ability to transform themselves from andragogy to heutagogy, given the context of technology-assisted classroom dynamics. Therefore, this paper is a modest attempt to examine the limitations of traditional mechanisms of assessment and thereby, pave the way for AI-led assessment in an ELL (English Language Learning) environment.

Keywords: *Learner-Centric Pedagogies, Andragogy, Heutagogy, Peer-Evaluation, AI-Led Assessment, etc.*

Introduction

Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW) are undoubtedly the macro skills offered in any language learning context. There have been several metrics, assessment techniques, and even massive frameworks designed to check the LSRW competencies of the learner, particularly in the ELL environment. The rationale is simple – English has become the global lingua franca and learners who are at the brink of becoming professionals in different walks of life, feel the need to unflinchingly navigate their ways through their English proficiency levels. This demand thus, puts an immense pressure on ELT experts to create pedagogies that best suit

Diverse learners and in addition, curate assessment techniques that are more objective in nature. The learners look at these assessment scores not only as grades or marks but as a credit score that can add value to their personality as well as their careers. Hence, the researcher of the current study humbly endeavours to locate the sequential methodology of introducing assessment in the ELL contexts of Indian Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and aims to explore the ways and means through which AI-led assessment can benefit every stakeholder (Mohammad et al., 2024a; Mohammad et al., 2024b; Mohammad et al., 2024c; Ghasemian et al., 2025; Riaz, 2025).

Literature Review

In 2018, when the first model of ChatGPT was introduced, scholars were oblivious to the fact that this innovation would revolutionize the education sector in forth coming years. And in less than half a

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decade, the advancements in Open AI led to a paradigmatic shift in reimagining the pedagogical implications of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in classroom and especially, in ELL contexts (Mohammad et al., 2024d; Ndububa, & Ugoala, 2025; Agnihotri, 2022). There is a plethora of literature on how chatbots can complement the learning journey of foreign languages as learning partners. But there seems to be lesser research in the area of AI's impact and its use in assessment patterns in several ELL contexts. Young and Shishido (2023) discuss the use of AI technologies for generating relevant material for EFL learners and even critically examine the incoherent output that Open AI's Chat GPT generate when not fed with proper prompts (Mohammad et al., 2024e; Mohammad et al., 2024f). However, their study does not comment much in the case of assessments in EFL education. Zadorozhnyy & Lai (2023) take a step further by investigating the effectiveness of chat bots in enhancing students' second language (L2) communicative practices in general and L2 written communication in particular.

In fact, the need for developing a balanced approach to study the AI integration into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context is bridged by Roe, Perkins, & Tregubova (2024). Their proposal for a five-level framework to ethically integrate GenAI tools into EAP instruction without compromising academic integrity is indeed a meaningful research study that aims to maximize the pedagogical benefits by carry in a critical analysis of improvement in learner outcomes. However, this paper does not consider andragogy and even heutagogy as significant existing approaches towards EAP (Mohammad et al., 2024g; Mohammad et al., 2024h; Lestari et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2024). Bijuet.al. (2024) try to tap the exponential growth of AI in L2 and EFL education and argue that AI-assisted language assessment certainly helps in lowering anxiety, improving attitudes, and increasing the motivation of the present-day students; their findings are a result of a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. These studies definitely promise a better future for 21st century learners with AI-integrated instruction and assessment but most of the available literature fails to approach ELT and assessment through pedagogy, technology, and purpose; especially with the lens of andragogy and heutagogy (Shlash Mohammad et al., 2024a).

Many Indian scholars have strongly stated their conviction towards the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as more than an instructional aid in the language classroom. Khasatiya (2023) wonderfully explains the synergy shared between ICT and ELT and even argues that ICT, by enabling a student-led classroom, transforms the element of pedagogy. But the current study vouches to go beyond pedagogy and explore concepts of andragogy and heutagogy which are the requirements of the 21st century Indian ELL education. When learners in India complete their high school or intermediate studies, they pursue professional courses which harp on honing the English communicative skills, irrespective of disciplines. But as far as the general observations go, the Indian ELL education is still exploring pedagogical concerns which does not match with the expectations of their target audience. These learners are adults who do exhibit signs of internal motivation but need learner autonomy and an approach that can tap on their accumulated experience to make learning English language an enjoyable process. Malcolm Knowles felt the urgency of this matter at a global scenario and pioneered the concept of 'andragogy' (1984) that differentiated how adults learn. His model reshaped adult education by promoting learner-centered approaches. Expanding on this, Hase and Kenyon (2000) proposed heutagogy, a theory of self-determined learning that highlights learner capability, flexibility, and non-linear learning processes. Unlike andragogy, heutagogy empowers learners to define their learning paths in complex, changing environments. Both frameworks have influenced contemporary education, especially in adult and digital learning contexts, where autonomy and adaptability are essential principles that are increasingly relevant in online and language education settings.

Methodology

The focus on the principles of doing ELT were, are, and will be relevant for even the for the coming generations but, modifying the way ELT is done in Indian HEIs is indeed the need of the hour. The researcher thus firmly believes that the undergraduates of the country will be able to use English independently if their ELT curriculum is implemented with a thrust on andragogy. The postgraduates of the nation will automatically then be self-directed to doing English in a better way provided, their ELT curriculum is implemented with an emphasis on heutagogy. The role of the instructor in the former will be that of a facilitator or enabler whereby she would develop a climate of collaboration, respect and openness (Shlash Mohammad et al., 2024b; Yaseen et al., 2021). The role of the

teacher in the latter will be to simply develop her learner's capability as her learners would already know—how to learn, would be creative, have a high degree of self-efficacy, would be able to even apply their competencies in novel or familiar situations, and would definitely be able to act as a respectful team player. This shift in focus from pedagogy to andragogy, and subsequently to heutagogy in terms of curriculum design and implementation would significantly benefit all stakeholders of ELT in India.

The major change required to allow this shift to function smoothly would be first, to realign the resources as well as reasons for learning; and second, to revisit the arena of assessments for undergraduate and postgraduate students. If the thrust lies on andragogy for the undergraduate students, then as adults, they will be allowed to use their own and other's experiences as the primary resources for learning. And as far as reasons for learning are concerned, it is a dictum that adults best learn when they experience a need to know or to perform more effectively. If these two factors are channelized properly with the use of appropriate strategies in the ELT education, Indian undergraduates will not struggle to use English for communication – they will rather be confident English speakers who would further be able to explain concepts from their own respective fields in English language. As the thrust lies on heutagogy for the postgraduate students, the teacher would provide some resources but her learners would decide the path by negotiating learning. In such a case, learning is not necessarily planned or linear. Because, it is based on the identification of the potential to learn in novel situations. Therefore, once this need gets manifested in the target group, ELT can no more be delimited to the traditional methods.

If tradition and talent are the two sides of the same coin then, artificial intelligence in ELL education can work as a boon in disguise. At this juncture, the India academia is witnessing two extremes – the technocrats deify the use of AI tools in all spheres of life and the veteran educationists demonize the use of AI tools in the classroom teaching-learning environment. Nevertheless, what serves as the golden mean is that “teachers are the backbone of the classroom and the driving force behind the next stage of AI growth in teaching”(Zhang, et.al, 2023; Albelbisi et al., 2021). The young adults of India are mature learners who wish to participate in smarter assessment mechanisms that not only test rote learning but also peer learning in communicative contexts. Xu, et. al. in 2021 had published a paper on assessing L2 English speaking using automated scoring technology. There seems to be no dearth of research in the case of using AI tools for assessment in education but there are hardly any studies that focus on realigning assessment using AI tools with andragogy and heutagogy perspectives in HEIs.

The traditional challenges in language learning and evaluation can easily be overcome by AI. To provide a less anxious learning environment and improve student learning outcomes, it is imperative for teachers to adopt and adopt the trends in language assessment with AI tools that can even become beneficial in providing instantaneous and tailored feedback. Due to the class size, teachers are unable to provide timely feedback to their adult learners who desperately look forward for learning about their areas of improvement. In the absence of an expert advice, most of the learners fall back on peer evaluation which sometimes does not gel well with the facilitators present in the class. But there is a way to mitigate this problem – peer evaluation can be practiced ethically amongst undergraduate students where by AI can guide students with language support, suggested unbiased assessment criteria, and monitor for plagiarism promoting respectful and inclusive peer-learning experiences which can further formulate to be a part of the facilitator's rubrics in the assessment of the target group.

Data Analysis and Finding

Most of the senior teaching professionals refrain from acknowledging the fact that AI can instead provide safe learning environment and also help reduce negative personal evaluation in ELL education. Hence, the researcher conducted a short survey to prove the same – she collected samples from 30 English teachers across India out of which 40% of them had more than 20+ years of teaching experience. 50% of them were undergraduate teachers; 30% of them 'rarely' and 30% of them 'sometimes' used AI for assessment in the classroom – as per the diagram below.

How often do you use AI tools (e.g., Grammarly, ChatGPT, Turnitin) as part of your assessment process?

30 responses

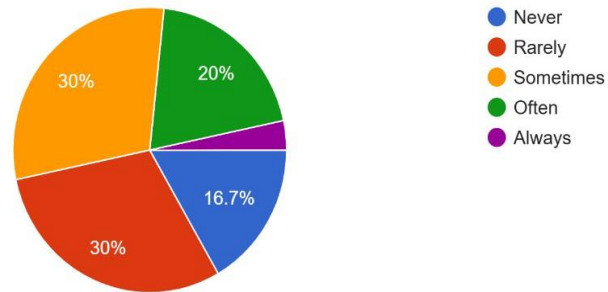


Figure 1

Majority of the participants were skeptical about using AI tools to assess important LSRW skills and were not quite hopeful about AI reducing the burden of grading workload without compromising the assessment quality. The diagrams below represent the responses of the survey participants.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how effective do you believe AI tools are in supporting fair and accurate assessment of student writing?

30 responses

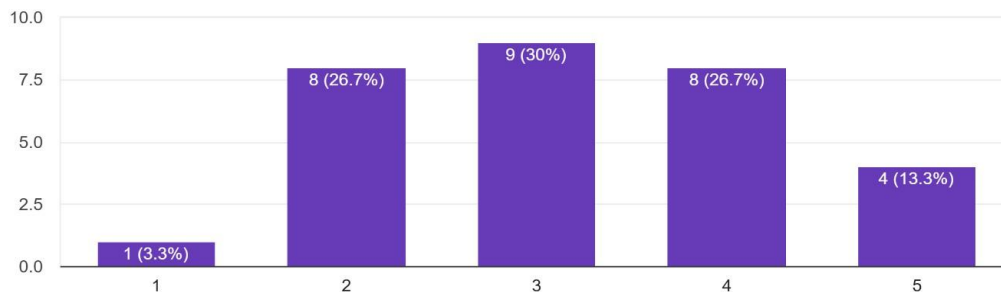


Figure 2

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "AI tools can reduce my grading workload without compromising assessment quality."

30 responses

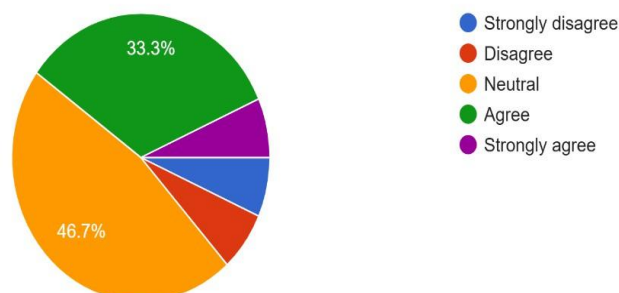


Figure 3

This survey justifies that the experienced ELT fraternity has still not accepted the AI intervention in the HEI classrooms. But on the contrary, as per the NITIAayog 2025 report, more than 60% of schools in India have already inclined towards AI-powered learning tools. If most of the school students are trained in a manner where they get habituated of this form of personalized education, then they will certainly demand the same situation to persist in HEIs. But if the future undergraduates are not fed with AI as their creative partner in their classrooms and especially in ELL contexts, then there shall be a complete discord in learning outcomes that may hamper the competencies of the future learners.

Conclusion

Therefore, there is a need to realign English Language teaching and assessment through pedagogy, technology, and purpose so that the HEI facilitators can carefully blend AI as a cognitive tool with a focus on andragogy and heutagogy perspectives keeping in mind the learner maturity and autonomy requirement in the ELL education. The study was limited to only exploring the concepts of andragogy and heutagogy in Indian HEIs considering the advancement in AI tools and their implication on ELL education. The survey too did not have the scope to consider HEI students' responses regarding their idea of AI-enabled mentor in the language classroom. This certainly calls for future research on how AI-literacy can become the new normal for both teachers and students in English Language education.

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