

On Promotion of Learner Autonomy in ELL among Plus Two Learners through Blended or Phygital Teaching Learning Model

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Abstract

This is the age of digitalism and information explosion. Moreover modern generation is born and brought in the internet technology. Here teachers and researchers have to examine how far is the digital divide between the fast growing internet technology and teaching methodology. Within a period of a couple of decades technology has changed itself and the world beyond imagination. But very little has changed with the process and methods of teaching, particularly English language teaching (ELT). English language proficiency of the plus two Learners is by and large far below the level of expected standard despite the fact that they learn English as a second language for almost twelve to thirteen years. It is anticipated that the plus two learners must have acquired a basic standard of using the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW) and that English language use should be automatic habit with them. Also they should be inclined to love and learn English for life long. Here lies the importance of learner autonomy with regard to the English language learning (ELL). This study - "On Promotion of Learner Autonomy in ELL among Plus Two Learners through Blended or Phygital Teaching Learning Model" - focuses on explaining what is Learner Autonomy and Phygital Learning. First, it explains what learner autonomy exactly means by quoting definitions from Holec, Littlewood, Dam, Benson, Dickinson...and pointing out their true implications [2-6]. The study also mentions the salient features of learner autonomy. Then it makes a general study on Phygital learning model, stating its evolution and development briefly. More importantly it studies five literature reviews which argue that Phygital or blended learning model promotes learner autonomy and learning outcome levels. The study focuses on development of learner autonomy through Phygital learning mode in English language learning (ELL). It concludes by stating that Phygital learning is highly helpful to fostering learner autonomy level of the students. Last it points out certain issues to be addressed for successful implementation of Phygital education model.

Keywords: Learner Autonomy, Blended learning, Hybrid learning, E- learning, Phygital learning, Schoolome, Augmented reality, virtual reality.

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INTRODUCTION

Tremendous developments have taken place in education sector across the globe, especially after the advent and advancement of internet technology. Ours is a fast changing world and education in theory and practice also should update and upgrade in accordance with the changing time. Unfortunately very little has our teaching learning environment changed. Teacher centred chalk and talk methods still persist. Learning has not yet been

liberated from teacher-textbook-classroom triad to which it is tethered still. Our curriculum, pedagogy and methods have been designed rightly not for the current learner generation. Modern learner generation are netizens who are baptised in internet technology. Nevertheless, most higher secondary students' English proficiency is appallingly far inferior to the expected acquisition level despite learning English language for twelve to thirteen years. Hence the importance of learner autonomy to be developed through phygital teaching learning model. Learner autonomy means freedom and flexibility of learning at the learners' time and pace, whereby they become responsible for their own learning. Increased learner responsibility leads to maximum exposure to learning experience and desired learner achievement. Phygital means physical plus digital, i.e. a judicious blend of face to face (classroom) learning with online (digital) learning. There is no other go than to make a paradigm shift from the only classroom binge learning to the blended learning model because that is the dire demand of the age. Moreover, learner autonomy cannot fully be fostered unless Phygital teaching learning model is implemented. More motivated learner learns more through e-resource and enthuse to engage creatively in actual classroom interactions than one who is not. Autonomous learning through Phygital mode will be the new normal in our school sector in short future.

LEARNER AUTONOMY

"Given that learner autonomy is widely considered to be one of the important goals in language education "[1]. The definitions of Holec, Littlewood, Dam, Benson and Dickinson etc are relevant to be considered [2–6] Holec (1981) describes the term- learner autonomy- as the ability to take charge of one's own learning...a psychological perspective emphasising broader attitudes and cognitive abilities that enable the learner become more responsible for his or her own learning [2]. Dam defines learner autonomy as "a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others as a socially responsible person "[4]. Autonomous learners are able to make decisions about their own learning. Benson introduces different versions of autonomy- "technical, psychological, and political "[5, 6]. He uses these terms to identify different at home or at an informal place using digital resources. Technical aspect says that the learner learns language outside the classroom. That means learner autonomy is learning to learn how to learn. Psychological version focuses on a construct of attitudes and abilities that make Learners more responsible for their own learning. It refers to learners' self motivation, perseverance and emotional commitment to lifelong learning. By political autonomy Benson implies that the learners exercise their discretion over the materials and methods of learning [5, 6]. Here the learners' meta cognitive knowledge works. Littlewood defines learner autonomy as the learner willingness and ability to act independently. Dickinson clarifies in his book- "Self Instruction "(Oxford university press) how learners can learn foreign language without the direct help from a teacher.

SALIENT FEATURES OF LEARNER AUTONOMY:

1. Increased learner responsibility
2. Learner is self motivated
3. Self directed learning
4. Seeks and uses internet resources
5. Creative classroom interactions
6. Learner centred education
7. Freedom and flexibility of learning
8. Learning by doing and enjoying.
9. Advanced linguistic competence
10. Systematic lifelong learning.

WHAT IS PHYGITAL LEARNING?

Phygital learning model is the confluence of both physical (PHY) and digital (GITAL) channels of multidimensional learning experiences that would enhance learner autonomy level and learning outcome of the learners. Phygital learning is a novel pedagogical approach that integrates physical

classroom environment with digital resources utilisation for the promotion of learner autonomy among learners. E-learning, hybrid learning, and blended learning are the prototypes of Phygital learning. It is an innovative platform of face to face classroom seamlessly integrated with digital devices for teaching learning purposes. Phygital mode is the new trend in marketing at large. Phygital platform is currently used in learning games, fine arts, cuisine as well as in business across the globe largely after covid19. And hence it's positively hoped that Phygital model of teaching learning will be the new normal in short future at least in our school sector. Tele-medicine, tele consultation, virtual home visit etc are not new combinations in the post modern era, especially during and after the pandemic period. Phygital learning space is largely used nowadays as the new educative model that combines both actual and virtual modes ostensibly for unlimiting the scope of education through learner autonomy development. Phygital instructional process is playful, open and flexible. Phygital learning space offers wonderful possibilities for learning English as a second language. Phygital learning model fosters autonomous ways of learning English as a second language. Phygital platform promotes spirit of enquiry and self learning habits of the learners. A linguistic item taught in the classroom should have supplementary digital resources for the students to refer, so that Phygital learning becomes meaningful.

BLENDED LEARNING LITERATURE REVIEWS:

Blended learning and learner autonomy, October 13/2021 olga kokaulora. The article titled "What is Blended Learning." explains the meaning and methods of blended learning and its benefits as well. It face to face instruction combined with technology so as to enhance learning experience and broaden understanding. It also differentiates Blended learning from Hybrid learning. The features of blended learning are 1. Active learner involvement, 2. effective teacher learner interactions, 3. increased learner responsibility, 4. Flexibility and freedom of learning, 5. improved learner performance, 6. promoting self learning, 7. Collaborative learning....Role of Teachers in Blended Learning Environment is that teacher turns to be a coach or mentor, turns from knowledge provider to facilitator...remembers jug and mug theory of Rogers(1983) and Benson (2001) [5–7].

'Development of Autonomous Learner through Blended Learning' by Bruce Lander, Tetsuo kurumato published by Saga university international repository argues that the onset of technology has affected education radically to change. The article says that blended learning as redirected learning depending largely on internet technology which transforms learning interesting, providing deeper, wider learning experience to students at their own pace and time. Hence blended learning promotes learner autonomy. This paper claims to "introduce theoretical framework behind the proposed research for PhD thesis at the department of education at Saga university.

The paper underlines the fact that the age of technology, in which the learners are techie-savvy or netizens, opens immense possibilities of making modern education maximum effective through blended teaching learning model. The paper also stresses the point that it is high time we must redefine and restructure modern education system on par with the technical development. Prensky claims "today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed for". The theoretical framework of the research programme runs through three parts- learner autonomy, technology, and blended learning. The last part deals with the specific research questions in those fields. The paper puts forward the idea that the jug and mug theory (Rogers 1983, Hobbs in 1986, Benson 2001) is absurdly [5, 7]. It says that teaching is not passing information from teacher to students as water fills the empty mug from a full jug. Teaching is not transfer of information. Knowledge is constructed, not imparted. Teacher should act as a facilitator, creating a congenial climate for learning.

The study reveals that defining learner autonomy is difficult as it varies from person to person, pertaining to their age, acquired knowledge, their perception of learning [1]. Still the study says that learner autonomy means learner taking control of and responsibility for one's own learning and that learner autonomy is a lifelong endeavour [9, 10]. Here the study also underlines the definition of learner autonomy by Holec (1981) [2].

HYBRID LEARNING

Hybrid learning and Iranian EFL learners Autonomy in vocabulary learning (English Language Department of Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran) published in 2013 by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under CC-BY-NC-ND-license [11]. The study focuses on the development of learner autonomy level and vocabulary knowledge through hybrid learning (HL). Hybrid learning in other way is called blended learning. It comprises traditional classroom learning (TCL), computer assisted language learning (CALL) and self directed learning (SDL). The course incorporates a course weblog, online dictionary, various vocabulary related websites. The study proves that learner's autonomy level and vocabulary knowledge increased after attending the hybrid learning course. The study stresses the point that learning has undergone tremendous changes from the past. The classroom bound learning has limits and it affects the quality of learning as well. Online distance education also has its drawbacks. A judicious blend of teacher assisted as well as computer enabled learning would bring about improved learner autonomy level and content knowledge level. This combination widens the scope of language teaching learning process.

The Research Voyage: An International Bi- Annual Peer Reviewed Multidisciplinary Research Journal (online), Volume 2, No.2, December 2020.ISSN-2582-6077...Journey of Blended Learning from Past Twenty Years in India: A systematic review by Piali Sarkar: research scholar, department of English, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab... makes a study on blended learning model. It says blended learning is an innovative pedagogical strategy, more used in developed countries than in developing countries like India for the improvement of the education system. The study also delineates its history. Blended learning has been in the evolution for the last six decades ever since the introduction of PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations) in 1960 by the University of Illinois. Later e-learning was introduced with the advancement of technology and subsequently e-learning evolved into hybrid learning and at last hybrid learning was moulded into blended learning in the year 2006 by Bonk and Graham in their book "Textbook of Blended Learning" [12].

Education Plus, The Hindu daily on April 25 Monday. Article "Enter Schoolome Learning " written by Madhuvanti. S. Krishnan quoted from Venguswamy Ramaswamy, global head, TCS. Ion. The study focuses on Venguswamy's talks about Phygital learning. The term Phygital was in use even before the pandemic and that was used in e- commerce by integrating physical and digital worlds together to enhance customer experience. According to Ramaswamy Phygital learning is the way ahead. The recorded audio-video lessons and long PDF contents imparted to students during pandemic period were dull and dragging. Learners attention span was short and so they preferred micro learning. Thus learning through devices was accepted in general. School learning is unavoidable and together with home learning using devices should also be promoted. Thus a new term was coined- school + home = schoolome which ,of course, means Phygital learning model. School learning can be reinforced and supplemented by exploring and accessing e- resources independently by students themselves. Here the teachers have to be empowered to use computer technology so as to impart innovative learning experiences to students through AR and VR. Augmented reality (AR) means enhanced version of the real Physical world that is achieved through the use of digital visual elements, sound, and other sensory stimuli delivered via technology(google). Virtual reality (VR) is the use of computer technology to create a stimulated environment (definition taken from google). The study also says that this new platform will improve self led learning, time management and self discipline which are the salient features of learner autonomy. Schoolome model will enable students to seek and use language acquisition strategies to learn.

CONCLUSION

The article 'Promote Learner Autonomy' by Albert Rayan on 23 January, 2021 of The Hindu daily, emphasises that Blended Approach would be the best way forward for new age learning at least in school sector when it reopens after covid pandemic. Traditional classroom teaching and spoon feeding

are already outdated. A blend of online learning and face to face classroom instruction is the need of the age. Blended learning promotes learner autonomy. Flexible learning, effective learning, potential full growth...are the benefits of the Blended Learning Model. Students can decide their own time, pace and place of learning. Learners can access online quality materials as audio/video/pdf resources from top institutions. But the following issues have to be addressed for successful implementation of Blended or Phygital Learning Model.

1. Access to internet.
2. Teacher proficiency in technology.
3. Teachers to be cognisant of blended teaching learning model.
4. Learner-Teacher-Parent triad building.

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