Chapter 77

The Marketing Strategies and Applications of English Language Teaching (ELT) Programs via Distance Education

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this descriptive study is to review the marketing strategies and applications of English Language Teaching (ELT) programs via distance education. The study, firstly, introduces the role of English as a global language in the 21st century and the importance of marketing of English Language Teaching (ELT) programs, examines using ways of distance education and distance teacher training in ELT, and finally, presents the some sample of websites on marketing ELT programs and products via e-Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Today more than a billion people speak English. English is now a global language and this language, like football and other sports, began here and has spread to every corner of the globe. It is becoming the world's language: the language of the internet, of business, of international flight - the pathway of global communication and global access to knowledge. It has become the vehicle for hundreds of millions of people of all countries to connect with each other, in countless ways. Indeed, English is much more than a language: it

is a bridge across borders and cultures, a source of unity in a rapidly changing world. English language teaching (ELT) has been an important global activity and a large business and industry for the past five decades or so.

This has been concurrent with the international role English language has been playing on the world arena in the postcolonial/neocolonial age. A very important aspect of the politics and economics of English today is ELT (Phillipson, 1990; Bourne, 1996). ELT has become a global activity and to a large extent a business and industry, which can be dated to the 1950s (Dua, 1994; Pennycook, 1994). English and ELT within this context has become a valuable commodity for export and a profit-making multinational industry in the hands of the West (Al-Issa,2002).

The rapid developments and diffusion of ICT is both a contributor to, and a resultant of, the broader socioeconomic changes discussed in this paper, and it affects the entire context and ecology of language teaching today. No discussion of technology's impact on English teaching would be complete without analyzing the state of distance education. Universities and the private sector are rushing into distance education, seeking to reach new markets and achieve economies of scale. This is part of a broader process of the commercialization of higher education which began in the area of research (with production and sale of patents and exclusive licenses) and has now shifted to education with production and sale of copyrighted videos, courseware, CD-ROMs, Web sites, and packaged courses.

Everything in the world today needs to be marketed well; even education, hence marketing strategies and distance learning go hand in hand. In order to create a lasting impact on the minds of the target audience, educational institutions offering distance learning programs need to be a cut above the rest. Education is a service and any service needs to be marketed well to be attractive to the consumer, who in this case is a student. It's a changing world, and technology has become

the backbone of any distance education program. Marketing strategies and distance learning are symbiotic, since education is essentially a service and deals with human beings. Hence student enrollment and retention are very critical aspects for a college to consider (Zorn, 2007). Marketing and encouraging e-Learning takes place on many levels (internal, external, to educators, as a business, etc.) and involves many different aspects (infrastructure, content, systems, etc.). At every stage of e-Learning implementation, the important issues are social resistance, change management, and promotion.

Teaching English a second or foreign language has become one of the challenging educational endeavors since its inclusion into the school programs. As learning cannot be confined to the boundaries of classroom and four or five year intensive programs and much of learning continues outside the traditional classroom, it has become a requirement to provide new ways of keeping language teacher up-to date with the latest development in their professions. At this point distance education programs can facilitate the marketing of English Language Teaching (ELT) programs. The main aim of this study is to review the marketing strategies and applications of English Language Teaching (ELT) programs via distance education.

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The new global economic order, termed *Informationalism* by Castells (1996), first emerged in the 1970s following advances in computing technology and telecommunications. Informationalism has given rise to economic, social, and cultural dynamics which are very different than those of the industrial area and which are shaped by an overriding contradiction between the power of global networks and the struggle for local identity (Barber, 1995; Castells, 1996;

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