

RECENT TRENDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

English language teaching has undergone tremendous changes over the years, especially the last ten years. Students are burdened with studying, learning and grasping the materials, and of course, lectures with the collection of relevant information from prescribed texts. Many career alternatives once regarded insignificant are gaining importance at present such as communication skills, soft skills, technical skills, interpersonal skills, ICT literacy etc. The need for chiseled graduates to merge successfully in the tough competition of survival in the global market is in great demand nowadays. For this, a change in the trend especially the teaching learning process of English language has to undergo a transition for the betterment. Seasons change, fashion changes, attitudes of human beings change but it is disheartening to note that in the last century English curriculum has hardly undergone any change

Key Words: communication skills, information, learning, soft skills, teaching, trends

Changes in goals of English teaching and learning

The goals of ELT have changed from focusing solely on developing language skills and mimicking native English speakers to fostering a sense of social responsibility in students. With this growing awareness of the importance of producing responsible citizens for society, teachers now well recognize that the teaching of English is not simply a project to prepare students to imitate native English speakers as language learners but that it should produce fully competent language users, critical thinkers, and constructive social change agents, as Crystal (2004) and Cook (2005) noted.

Change in the Approach to Teaching Culture

Long gone are the days when focus in ELT was on “Keeping the foreign culture island alive”. In the last two decades both the local or native and international culture dominate in English language classes. There is less focus on teaching the culture of native speakers of English unless there is a specific purpose for doing so.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

The CLIL is an approach where the English teacher uses cross curricular content and so the students learn both the content and English. CLIL is an innovative methodological approach that aims to foster the integrated learning of languages and other curricular contents. Besides, it has been proved that CLIL benefits and bolsters learners’ foreign language skills as well as motivation and attention. Nonetheless, the correct implementation of CLIL implies reinforcement in areas such as teacher training, team teaching, education and assessment planning, and additional resources. Luisa and Renau (2016).

According to Coyle (1999-in Lusua and Renau, 2016) a well-planned CLIL lesson should combine the 4Cs of the curriculum, these are the following ones:

- a) **Content:** enabling progress in the knowledge, skills and understanding of the specific issues of a particular curriculum.

- b) **Communication:** using language to learn while learning to use language itself.
- c) **Cognition:** developing thinking skills which link concept formation, knowledge and language.
- d) **Culture:** allowing exposure to diverse perspectives and shared knowledge that make us more aware the others and oneself.

Change in Teaching Content and Test Design

Boraie (2014) indicated that teachers use a range of local texts or English translations of literature in the classroom. The use of language as well as the use of a variety of accents in listening activities or tests is encouraged in the English language classroom.

In addition, Classroom-based language assessment is in focus. Rise of classroom-based language assessment in both developed and developing countries (Davison & Leung, 2009). Different terms used include – Teacher-based assessment – Alternative assessment – Assessment for learning – School-based assessment – Formative assessment.

Classroom-based language assessment can be defined as any reflection by teachers (and/or learners) on the qualities of a learner's (or group of learners') work and the use of that information by teachers (and/or learners) for teaching, learning (feedback), reporting, management or socialization purposes.' (Hill & McNamara, 2012, p. 396).

Syllabus design/materials development/global and local publishing

Much innovation has been notable in syllabus design, materials development, and Publishing, of ELT courses. To illustrate, (Underhill, 2004) assures significant developments in content (becoming less ethnocentric, more intercultural; less stereotyped, more critical), in syllabus (reflecting new descriptive information about language) and in methodology (reflecting ideas of student learning style and self-direction). There has also been an increasing tendency towards more locally relevant non-global publishing of courses and materials.

Criticism of published materials

However, some of the criticisms of course books and materials are opening up real areas for future development, for example, criticisms that focus on banal content in materials, seen as insulting to learner intelligence and as missing golden opportunities for content learning (for example teaching school subjects in or through English) or for values-laden teaching (e.g. developing global citizenship as a core content in global language learning). Other criticisms focus not so much on the course book, as on the grip of 'course book methodology'. But many teachers point out the great benefits they derive in developing their own knowledge, skills and confidence through using modern course books.

Global Englishes

Lindhal (2017) stated that the vast majority of communication in English happening around the world only includes an L1 speaker of English about 25% of the time . This use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) is important for English language teacher education because, historically, much of English language education has taken the native speaker as the ideal in terms of proficiency and accent. Now, most English communication occurs between English learners of English who have different L1s. Koch argues that teacher educators must ask themselves if their focus on "inner circle" countries and their English usage adequately prepares global students to interact with people who are not from those countries but who are English users.

Expanding the dimension of communicative competence

A large focus of recent research and publications has been expansion of the framework of communicative competence. Some scholars have introduced a new way of looking at second

language acquisition (SLA) as “multi-competence” (Cook, 2012), and others (Byram, 1997, Kohn, 2013) focus on the importance of intercultural communicative competence. The implication here is that when teaching intercultural communicative competence, teachers need to attend to both local and international cultures. The goal is to produce effective language users competent to use English as an international language, not just learners who mimic the “inner- circle” countries’ languages and cultures.

English as a lingua franca (ELF)

When the concept of English as a lingua franca was first discussed by teachers, academics, writers and trainers, it was controversial. Many refused to consider how the concept of English as an international language might fit into course materials and language teaching. Today, we see resource materials like PronPack 1-4 (Mark Hancock) taking a non-prescriptive approach to accent and instead focusing on increased intelligibility as the objective. Using elements of blended learning and gamification, this pronunciation course doesn’t help the learner sound British or American, but instead prepares the learner to use English in the global arena.

Teachers as lifelong learners

In a knowledge based society and to remain competitive and employable, teachers are expected to engage in a continuous professional development or the professional learning activities from the beginning to the end of their careers. As with any other profession, teachers are also expected to assume a greater responsibility for their own professional learning, continually developing their knowledge and skills.

Portfolio development for teachers

This is linked to reflective practice. I refer to a portfolio as the teachers' own statement of their teaching beliefs and values, and a profile of themselves in action. It consists of the teachers' own selection of whatever represents the best parts of their practice, including activities, materials designed, feedback from learners and peers, problems and difficulties faced and worked through, observation notes, test results, videos and audio tapes, anecdotes and stories, own reflections, plans, diary notes and so on. And all these selections are linked by a commentary saying why these selections were made and what they show. Portfolios encourage teachers to make their own meaning, define their own success, and to view their work consciously and critically from multiple perspectives.

Reflective practice and teacher learning

This is about teachers questioning and exploring their own practice of teaching. It is a sort of systematic curiosity about going beyond the edges of what we know and do, to find out how we could do things differently or better. Of particular interest are questions like 'Is there a discrepancy between what I say I do and what I actually do?' Action research might guide us to try to become more aware of our own beliefs and how they frame the way we teach and think about teaching. It brings an appreciation of the existence of this frame, and rigor about surfacing our unconscious slants, skews and biases if we want to make real changes to our practice.

Changing views of an effective English educator

With the changing views of communicative competence and the awareness of intercultural competence, perceptions of what constitutes an effective English teacher are also changing. Recent studies on World Englishes and ELF, as well as the roles of nonnative-English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) in the TESOL field, have made more people recognize that the effectiveness of English teachers should be determined by their linguistic, instructional, and intercultural competence rather than simply by their linguistic identity. We want to make sure that our students are served by well-prepared and well qualified teachers regardless their first language background.

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Students as Independent learners

Strategopedia: Give a man a fish He eats for a day Teach him to fish He eats for the whole life. A trend in ELT today has been to make the students independent learners. The purpose is to equip learners with appropriate learning strategies to take the responsibility for self- direction.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

A response to traditional teacher-led, grammar-oriented approaches of language instruction that encourages memorization, TBLT is a student-centered method that relies on interactive, meaningful activities. This approach moves away from grammatical drills, worksheets, and activities to replicate real-life experiences. Students use language to tackle real-world situations, learn how to ask questions, and negotiate meaning in how they interact with groups.

N.S. Prabhu outlines three primary types of tasks: Information gap tasks (for example, students try to coordinate schedules); reasoning gap tasks (students make decisions involving cost and value); and opinion gap tasks (students debate or complete stories).

Tactile and Embodied Learning

Primarily intended to meet the needs of kinesthetic learners, tactile and embodied learning incorporates movement and touch into the English teaching process to enhance memory and engagement. Real-life objects, crafts, games, and physical storytelling help students become involved in the process of learning.

English Endeavors offers a list of activities for teaching grammar, such as "Hands Up, Feet Down," a game that has students identify sentence fragments and run-ons using physical cues and movement.

Mobile Learning and Gaming

Apps and online games are more popular and accessible than ever. They offer new and exciting methods of teaching English. The Cambridge Dictionary's Wordable app, for instance, makes learning vocabulary fun through games students can play with friends.

Mobile apps and games are intended to reduce anxiety for students learning English because they remove the performance aspect of being in a classroom. A 2019 study found that mobile apps significantly improved vocabulary comprehension.

Blended Learning

Mobile or web-based learning is usually not effective on its own. Many English teachers prefer blended learning, which utilizes both traditional classroom support and autonomous web-based tools. While students receive guidance and foundations for learning in the classroom, they can engage with English outside of the classroom through digital games and practices.

Dr. Barbara McCombs suggests that a blended approach encourages students to think for themselves and offers opportunities for more individualized education.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL is an approach in which students learn English and a second subject at the same time. It is considered a somewhat more natural way to learn any language. Primarily based on English as a second or foreign language, CLIL involves teaching students a second subject in that language. The main idea behind this approach is that students are more motivated to learn English when they cannot comprehend the course content without it.

However, Aleksandra Zaparucha suggests that CLIL is also effective for introducing all students to academic language, which will be helpful as they move from high school into college.

Media Literacy

The avalanche of content from web-based sources and digital news outlets over the past 10 years has caused educators to become increasingly aware of the need for media literacy in their classrooms. Traditional methods of teaching English focus on equally traditional methods of publication, such as books. Since today's students are mostly consuming real-time digital content, media literacy focuses on teaching them to assess the credibility and reliability of what they read. Edutopia, for instance, offers educators helpful activities and resources for teaching students critical media literacy.

Conclusion

Repetitive practice, mechanical drills and memorization are the hallmarks of the traditional methods. Wilkins (1976,2) calls a synthetic in which different parts of the language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up. The autocratic or the authoritative role of the teacher which pertains to the long cherished traditional notion that pedagogic principles depend on how articulately a teacher teaches. It is imperative to understand the current trends and evaluative methods of the ELT. The theories and methods are constantly evolving in the ELT. The teachers of the ELT are aware of the best practices in teaching and learning English and how they can be made beneficial to the students. It is possible for every child to learn English in the most enjoyable manner if it is supplied with the right kind of materials and pedagogy produced by one's own native wisdom.

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