Research Paper

The Development of English Language Teaching Strategies and Methods: A Comparative Review

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Abstract

This paperaims to outline the historical evolution of English language teaching (ELT). The process went through transitional periods from the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1980s. To teach English as a second or foreign language (S/FL), all of the traditional and contemporary pedagogical approaches used in the field of English language teaching (ELT) have some value. Thorough investigations have been conducted to identify the sociocultural and psychological elements of learning a language using context-based, meaning-based, audio-lingual, and structural grammar methods.

The fundamental strategies employed by the intuitions are in line with the resources made available to instructors instructing English at the lower intermediate and intermediate levels. In many government schools and institutions, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is the primary method of teaching English. Therefore, to satisfy the modern world's needs, stakeholders and policymakers must examine the current syllabus and make any required adjustments.

Keywords: Curriculum, English Language Teaching, Syllabus, Curriculum, Audio-Lingual Method, Direct Method, Grammar Translation Method, Communicative Language Teaching.

I.   Introduction

The global demand for English language learning has increased due to its widespread usage as a foreign or second language, as well as its role in international commerce, science, education, and technology. English is adopted as a medium of instruction (MOI) and included in early grades, leading to the phenomenon known as "Englishization." This transformation of global literacy skills is crucial for enhancing global competitiveness within the knowledge economy. English proficiency is essential for individuals seeking to improve their employability and social status, and it can contribute to a nation's overall prosperity. In non-English speaking countries, especially developing ones., English holds a prominent role as one of the official languages and a primary medium of instruction within the educational system. These countries are recognized for its notable proficiency level in the English language, but there are still issues, particularly with reading comprehension, as the country fails to meet international test standards. Writing skills allow learners to work independently, while speaking skills require active participation in conversations and group participation. Research has identified expressing oneself in the foreign language classroom as the most significant cause of anxiety in language skills like listening, writing, and reading.

Teaching is connected to learning, with a teacher's understanding of learning shaping their knowledge of teaching. Effective teaching media and activities, such as games, are crucial for successful instruction, and increasing student engagement and motivation in language learning. This study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of different English teaching methods and assess the language learning skills in with a focus on strategies and approaches in developing non-English speaking countries.

1.   Phase After Partition

According to Haq (1993), a multilingual state consists of provinces that accommodate diverse cultures and communities to maintain its ideology. None of its provinces shows homogeneity in terms of the use of the national language. An example of this is the state of Pakistan where the main slogan of the Islamic movement

was to introduce Urdu as the national language, but the underlying factors reveal that the role of English has remained dominant both formally and academically. In most government settings, the official mode of correspondence and communication is still in English. English is also used in constitutional law, government, the courts, trade, and business. English is the primary language of communication in many professional domains, including computer technology, engineering, and medicine. Furthermore, because English serves as a medium of instruction for students ranging from lower intermediate to advanced levels of education, its standing and role in many states are multifaceted. Drama, poetry, and prose make up the entirety of the teaching resources utilized in public sector universities. The Structure Grammar Translation Method (SGTM) is the main teaching methodology used in these institutions.

The lack of conversational skills has made it ineffective for learning English as a second or foreign language. Though there are comprehension exercises meant to improve reading abilities at the conclusion of each chapter, the translation approach doesn't really aid in this process. As a result, many students never acquire the linguistic ability needed to use English in everyday settings. English also meets the basic needs of professionals working in a variety of sectors, including courtroom legal proceedings, interactions between academics and students, and research findings on important issues. It also serves as a sort of precondition for candidates taking competitive exams and interviewing for executive jobs. The majority of job postings place emphasis on spoken and written English competence during the hiring process in addition to prerequisites. Because of this, policymakers and stakeholders need to develop and put into practice effective teaching strategies to ensure that students learning English as a foreign language succeed.

2. English Teaching Methods

In essence, English serves as a global language medium for non-native speakers of various tongues. It has drawn a lot of interest from various public and commercial sector entities across multiple countries as an instructional medium. In their different academic contexts, practitioners, teachers, and professionals employ a variety of teaching strategies. The usage and use of pedagogical strategies in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) have been the subject of thorough research investigations. Recent research investigations have yielded significant findings that not only reveal a paradigm change but also shed light on the difficulties and problems encountered by non-native speakers. As a result, the methodology of English Language Teaching (ELT) emphasizes the parallels and divergences listed in the following theoretical framework.

3. Grammar Translation Method GTM (1840-1940)

Charlie (2013) asserts that the phrases "approach," "method," and "techniques" refer to comparatively hierarchical methods of instruction. From the 1840s until the 1940s, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) dominated both foreign and West language instruction, and it is still in use in several regions of the world in modified forms. Translating reading books into mother tongue, seeks to improve writing and reading abilities. Grammar and vocabulary norms are given priority while teaching a foreign language in an explicit manner. It suggests using a structural perspective of the target language to accomplish certain goals, including using lexis and memorizing rules and how they relate to sentence structures. The majority of the curriculum and resources offered in language classes are designed with the teacher in mind as the students remain passive receivers of information delivered by the teacher.

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is primarily favored by educators employed by Pakistan's government schools and universities. They firmly think that interactive classroom activities are the key to developing communicative competence, but that teaching the target language can only be accomplished through translating texts into one's mother tongue. The translation approach not only impedes language acquisition but also perverts the meaning-transmission function of language. The use of the (Aziz, 2010) Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is subject to the following restrictions:

A.   It transmits literary knowledge, but it ignores the capacity for language production in a formal or social setting.

B.   Teachers that employ the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) place more focus on the explanation of rules than on the purposes of linguistic structures.

C.   The Grammar Translation Method's (GTM) main goal is to provide readers with rules that emphasize form over meaning.

D.   When it comes to helping readers understand language tasks, teaching strategies frequently invest a significant amount of time and energy in translating texts.

E.   In order to avoid interacting with the pupils, teachers who use the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) want a controlled classroom environment.

4. The Direct Method (DM)

In response to the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) of language instruction, the Direct Method (DM) was developed in the late 1800s. The findings of research investigations demonstrated that the prior method of teaching languages was less successful in terms of students' acquisition of lexical and grammatical information. Because there is a clear correlation between the meaning of the target language structures or texts and the classroom situation, this approach has gained favour. The Direct Method (DM) places a strong emphasis on teaching and learning languages without regard for translation. Advocates of the Direct Method (DM) place a strong emphasis on interactive visual aids and graphics that encourage communication (Kumar Dey, 2013). Giving students interactive learning chances in a foreign language situation actually creates a naturalistic classroom atmosphere (Kumar Dey, pp. 173).

Charlie (2103) claims that one of the key components of the Direct Method (DM) is giving teachers' lectures a lot of weight. In contrast to the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), it places more emphasis on the role that teacher-initiated interactive classroom activities play in helping students develop their communicative abilities. By honing their oral communication abilities, the students improve their grammar and pronunciation correctness in addition to their fluency. Moreover, students are instructed to produce language without exhibiting expertise related target language. It might require written and oral abilities based on language output from conversations, interviews, and composing paragraphs on topics of general interest.

The Direct Method (DM) was widely used in many private language settings throughout Europe, according to (Sweet, 1912), but its use began to diminish after Henry Sweet identified some of the following restrictions and disadvantages:

A.   Although it offers improvements for educational procedures, it lacks a solid methodological foundation.

B.   Rather than using a textbook, it necessitates the assistance and knowledge of qualified English teachers. They are not skilled enough, though, to follow this method's guidelines.

C.   Strict adherence to the Direct Method (DM) is frequently ineffective since teachers must make tremendous efforts to refrain from speaking in the students' home tongue when, on occasion, a quick explanation in that language would be a more effective means of comprehension.

D.   Teaching strategies can be developed based on sound methodological principles, according to Sweet and other applied linguists. The Oral Approach (OA) or Situational Language Teaching (SLT) in the United Kingdom and the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) in the United States were founded as a result of later advances.

5. The Audio-Lingual Method ALM (1939-1945)

Different approaches and methods have been used to teach English to non-native speakers of other languages. One of the pedagogical approaches that suggests behaviorist theory for learning a target language is the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM). It was created in the United States of America for use in military communications during World War II (1939–1945). The main goal of the instruction program was to teach Army officers new languages rapidly and efficiently. The Army Specialized Training Programs (ASTP) were largely successful in giving a limited number of personnel target language proficiency (Richards, 1998).

Professor Nelson Brooks coined the phrase "Audio-Lingual Approach" (ALA) to describe his method of teaching languages in 1964, according to Kumar Dey. It is comparable to and pertinent to the application of the Direct Method (DM) for the purpose of developing oral proficiency. These are mostly viewed as a response to the Grammar Translation Method's (GTM) limitations. Furthermore, it disapproves of the usage of the mother tongue, especially while learning how to talk and listen in a foreign language. However, there are some fundamental distinctions. For example, The Direct Method (DM) emphasizes vocabulary learning, whereas The Audio-Lingual Approach (ALA) concentrates on (Grammatical Drills, 2013, p.176).

Accurate grammar and pronunciation are two of the main goals of the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM). It aids in the development of learners' abilities to respond swiftly and appropriately in foreign language conversation by using lexis and structures. A special focus is placed on learning the rules for combining language and becoming proficient with its building pieces. Additionally, it is believed that teaching grammar structures to pupils will inevitably aid in their development of communicative proficiency in the target language. The following are some traits of this approach:

A.   Language acquisition is the process by which habits are formed.

B.   Making mistakes is usually regarded as a bad habit that should be avoided.

C.   Speaking and writing are the most efficient ways to acquire language skills.

D.   Rather than analysis, analogy provides a sufficient basis for language development.

E.   Linguistic and cultural background can be used to learn word meanings (Richards, 1998).

According to Kumar Dey, the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) was developed to teach English as a second or foreign language and foreign languages. It peaked in the 1960s. However, in terms of language theory and learning practice, the theoretical underpinnings of the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) were primarily seen as

being faulty. Conversely, specialists and practitioners discovered inconsistent results when it came to language task completion. One such instance is the inability to apply knowledge gained from practicing the underlying approach to authentic communication outside of the classroom.

Both the Behaviourist Theory (BT) of language learning and the Structural Approach (SA) to language description are rejected by Chomsky (1995). According to Chomsky, speech can originate from an innate capacity of the human mind rather than just being learned through imitation and repetition. This theory essentially poses doubts and concerns about the use of the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) in language instruction. Following the development of psycho-linguistics in the 1950s, experts began to recognize the value of meaningful learning-focused activities. Ultimately, this resulted in a phase of modern teaching methods adaptation, innovation, and experimentation, including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Silent Way (SW), Natural Approach, and Total Physical Response (TPR).

6.   Communicative Language Teaching Approach (1960-1980)

In the late 1960s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was first implemented in Western nations. Shortly after contemporary approaches to teaching foreign languages emerged, it became clear that learning the forms, meanings, and functions of the target language was hampered by a lack of understanding of that language. Additionally, Lamie notes a fundamental shift in the paradigms of English language instruction (2005, pp. 51–52). She establishes the function of educators as catalysts for change in the process of integrating curriculum innovation. Thus, curriculum planners and producers need to pay particular attention to the function that communication plays in language instruction.

As to Kumar Dey's perspective, significant discoveries in applied linguistics emphasize communicative ability over the application of structures and lexis. The founding of Communicative Language Teaching (CLLT) was primarily influenced by this. He defines communicative competence as the capacity to make appropriate and useful use of the language system. Additionally, it establishes that the target language shall serve as the medium of communication in the classroom (2013, 178–179). However, mastery of the four fundamental language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—is necessary to become competent.

Richards (1986), reviewing the literature on Communicative Language Teaching, makes the case that changes have recently occurred in the process of learning a second or foreign language. These changes are partially attributable to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which was developed in reaction to conventional notions of the second and foreign-language acquisition process. The majority of conventional perspectives, such as the theory of habit formation, which assumes that language acquisition is a mechanical process, place a strong emphasis on grammatical competence and lexis mastery. Rather than focusing on the development of positive habits, Richards contradicts himself based on mental development. He disregards the incorrect presumptions generated by classical theories that have no bearing on the most recent advancements in cognitive psychology (pp. 64–65).

Furthermore, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) places a strong emphasis on the teacher's role as a communicator who helps students start conversations with one another. To foster classroom collaboration, creative teaching techniques and the genuine application of texts are needed. Learning opportunities that the teacher creates or facilitates are beneficial to the students. Students often complete a large number of communicative tasks in small groups. When they perform or communicate in class, they still place more emphasis on negotiating meaning than on form. A key component of the Communicative Approach (CA) is having pupils engage in a cognitive process to learn about language performance.

It recommends using guessing games, role-plays, and problem-solving exercises in official educational settings. A variety of these exercises pique students' interests and inspire them to begin the process of learning a foreign language. Thus, (Richards et al.) draw attention to a few of the following crucial components of communicative language teaching:

A.   It is more concerned with message than form.
B.   The intended outcome is the development of communicative competence.
C.   It suggests a learner-centered methodology.
D.   The Communicative Approach's main objective is fluency (C.A).
E.   To share ideas, students are expected to interact with one another.
F.   Use of dialogues focuses on communication functions.
G.   Communication is more engaging when it is driven by intrinsic motivation.
H.   The task-based learning approach is recommended for achieving specific goals.

The discussion's findings show that there are benefits and drawbacks to the fundamental techniques used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM), one of the earliest instructional methods, appears antiquated in light of cognitive psychology's slow but steady advancement. Both students and teachers favor the student-centered approach in the context of foreign language

acquisition in the contemporary ELT period. Professionals must consequently provide their students with up-to-date information and tactics for learning English as a foreign language (EFL).

As a result, there is a lot of interest in Communicative Approach (CA) and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) worldwide. The paradigms of English Language Teaching (ELT) have improved thanks to these contemporary approaches. Enough research has been done to support the idea that Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a useful strategy for raising students' language competence levels. Actually, additional methodological adjustments seem to be in store for language studies in the future. Future paradigms appear to have an impact on how English is taught and learned now. Choosing an effective teaching strategy that meets the academic and language needs of students in an environment where language learning is taking place becomes a major problem for experts and practitioners.

7.   English Language Teaching and Academic Context

As we've already discussed, English instruction is a longstanding practice across many nations, particularly in the countryside. In government schools and universities, English is taught as a required subject from elementary to intermediate levels. A lot of educators use the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) when instructing in English. The majority of them lack the tools and resources needed to further their careers. It is customary for educators to adhere to modern pedagogical approaches.

It has also been noted that teachers of English in an EFL context frequently encounter difficulties due to a lack of awareness and training resources. Fundamental pedagogical ideas related to English Language Teaching (ELT) must be understood by practitioners before they may instruct students in English as a foreign or second language. According to research on teaching English to foreign language learners, using an authoritative teaching style in a formal classroom setting demotivates and discourages students. They do not resist the lessons being delivered to them via an antiquated and poorly constructed course.

According to (Lightbown and Spada, 1999), foreign language instructors use a range of techniques in their individual classroom environments to teach English as a foreign language in order to satisfy contemporary requirements. Conversely, the following elements are prioritized in traditional English teaching methods:

A.   form-focused instructions
B.   Teacher-oriented strategies
C.   controlled classroom environment
D.   presentation of information
E.   memory-based learning phenomenon

The problem of learning a foreign language is not sufficiently addressed by the GTM approach. Advanced teaching tactics are essential for facilitating learning in a formal classroom setting and supporting students in strengthening their communication abilities. It is general knowledge that language instruction in public sector universities emphasizes a teacher-directed method in which students are not required to think for themselves or solve problems on their own. This seriously impairs the student's capacity to cultivate a unique way of thinking about learning on a psychological level.

It might be difficult for any teacher to use communicative tactics to bring creativity and change into their classroom environments. It is possible that learners' reluctance and resistance to change stem from their prior experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and teacher-oriented learning background and attitude. The majority of them are seen to mostly rely on lecture techniques and rarely engage in interactive learning exercises. The incorrect learning habits based on teacher-oriented and Grammar Translation Methods (GTM) are the root cause of students' passivity.

Regarding the teaching of English as a foreign language (TOEFL), there are fundamental beliefs and attitudes across nations, especially with regard to state-run establishments. Generally speaking, educators think that the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) is the sole way to learn English. The challenge of replacing conventional methods used in language schools was raising awareness of cutting-edge and creative teaching resources. As a result, educators found it difficult to embrace change and incorporate communication techniques into their learning settings.

II.   Conclusion and Recommendations

In light of the historical evolution of English language teaching (ELT), the landscape of pedagogical approaches has undergone significant transformations, driven by both societal needs and advancements in linguistic theory. The prevalence of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which has dominated English teaching in various contexts, particularly in governmental institutions, highlights the challenges associated with traditional methods that prioritize rote learning and rule memorization over communicative competence. Though GTM has historically served its purpose, it has become increasingly apparent that it is inadequate for developing the language skills necessary for real-life communication. This reality emphasizes the need for stakeholders and policymakers to critically examine and reform current syllabi to align with modern demands.

The advent of contemporary teaching strategies, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), reflects an important paradigm shift from teacher-centered methodologies to more student-centered approaches. Such methods prioritize fluency and the ability to negotiate meaning, encouraging active engagement and collaboration among learners. This shift is especially crucial in non-native English-speaking countries, where English serves as a vital tool for academic and professional advancement. Educators must embrace innovative instructional techniques that integrate interactive activities, authentic materials, and real-world contexts, fostering an environment where learners can practice language skills in meaningful situations. Furthermore, continuous professional development opportunities for teachers are essential to enable them to effectively deploy these modern approaches in their classrooms.

Consequently, challenges remain as many educators are still entrenched in traditional practices, often due to a lack of resources, training, or institutional support. To combat this, a comprehensive framework that equips teachers with the knowledge and tools for implementing contemporary methodologies is imperative. This framework should prioritize interactive learning, employ varied instructional materials, and leverage technology for language acquisition. Additionally, raising awareness about the importance of communicative competence and fostering a culture of innovation within schools can empower teachers to experiment with and adopt new strategies, ultimately transforming the learning experience for their students.

Lastly, in the context of English language education, inclusivity must be considered to account for diverse learning styles and cultural backgrounds. This approach not only enriches the learning environment but also prepares learners for a globalized world where English functions as a bridge across cultures. By integrating sociocultural awareness into English language curricula, educators can create responsive frameworks that acknowledge the unique challenges faced by learners from varied backgrounds, thus enhancing both engagement and proficiency. Through these concerted efforts, English language teaching can evolve to better meet the needs of students in today's interconnected landscape, ultimately ensuring they are well-prepared for future challenges.

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