CURRENT PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY

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Abstract: This article examines the contemporary challenges in English language teaching methodology in the context of globalization and rapid technological development. It analyzes key methodological problems such as the mismatch between traditional teaching approaches and modern learners' needs, insufficient integration of communicative and learner-centered methods, and limited use of digital technologies in the classroom. The study also highlights issues related to teachers' methodological competence, assessment practices, and motivation of learners. Particular attention is paid to the role of innovative pedagogical strategies in improving language proficiency and learning outcomes. The article concludes that addressing these challenges requires continuous professional development of teachers, effective use of modern educational technologies, and the adoption of flexible, communicative, and student-oriented teaching methodologies.

Keywords: English language teaching, teaching methodology, modern challenges, communicative approach, innovative methods, educational technologies

Introduction: In recent decades, the role of the English language has significantly increased due to globalization, international communication, and the expansion of digital technologies. As a result, the demand for effective English language teaching (ELT) has grown in educational institutions worldwide. This situation places new requirements on teaching methodologies, making it essential to reconsider traditional approaches to language instruction.

Despite numerous advancements in pedagogical theory, English language teaching methodology continues to face a number of contemporary challenges. These include the persistence of teacher-centered instruction, limited implementation of communicative and learner-centered approaches, insufficient integration of technology, and gaps in teachers' methodological competence. Furthermore, assessment systems often fail to accurately reflect learners' communicative abilities, focusing instead on grammatical accuracy rather than practical language use.

Modern learners require interactive, flexible, and meaningful learning environments that support the development of communicative competence. However, many educational contexts still rely on outdated methods that do not fully address learners' needs, learning styles, or real-life language use. This discrepancy highlights the necessity of methodological reform in English language education.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to analyze the modern problems in English language teaching methodology and to explore possible solutions through innovative pedagogical approaches. By identifying key challenges and discussing effective methodological strategies, the study aims to contribute to the improvement of English language teaching practices and learning outcomes.

Literature review: English language teaching (ELT) methodology has undergone significant transformation over the past decades, shifting from traditional teacher-centered approaches to more communicative and learner-centered paradigms. This shift is largely influenced by the growing need for learners to use English effectively in real-life communication rather than merely mastering grammatical structures (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

One of the most influential developments in ELT is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). According to Hymes (1972), the concept of communicative competence extends beyond grammatical knowledge to include the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. Subsequent studies have shown that CLT enhances learners' fluency, interaction skills, and motivation (Littlewood, 2004). However, researchers argue that the implementation of CLT remains problematic in many educational contexts due to large class sizes, rigid curricula, and limited teacher training (Harmer, 2015).

Another major focus in the literature is learner-centered education. Scholars emphasize that active learner involvement and autonomy are essential for effective language acquisition (Nunan, 1999). Learner-centered approaches encourage critical thinking, collaboration, and responsibility for learning. Despite their advantages, several studies report that teachers often struggle to shift control to learners because of institutional expectations and assessment pressures (Brown, 2007).

The integration of technology in English language teaching has also received considerable attention in recent research. Digital tools, such as learning management systems, mobile applications, and multimedia resources, are believed to support personalized learning and increase learner engagement (Chapelle, 2001). However, researchers identify challenges including insufficient technological infrastructure, lack of digital literacy among teachers, and resistance to change (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012).

Teacher professional competence is another critical issue discussed in the literature. Effective English language teaching requires not only linguistic knowledge but also strong methodological skills and continuous professional development (Richards, 2017). Studies indicate that many teachers continue to rely on traditional methods despite being aware of modern approaches, mainly due to limited access to training opportunities and professional support (Ur, 2012).

Assessment practices in ELT are also widely debated. Traditional testing methods tend to prioritize grammar and written accuracy, often neglecting speaking and listening skills (McNamara, 2000). Scholars argue that this imbalance negatively affects the development of communicative competence and does not align with modern teaching objectives (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

Materials and methods: This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate contemporary problems in English language teaching methodology. The research is based on the analysis of both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with English language teachers, while secondary data consisted of academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and previous empirical studies related to English language teaching methodology.

The participants of the study included English language teachers working in secondary schools and higher education institutions. A purposive sampling method was used to select participants with at least three years of teaching experience to ensure informed and relevant perspectives on methodological challenges in English language instruction.

Classroom observations were conducted to examine teaching practices, instructional strategies, and learner engagement in real classroom settings. An observation checklist was designed to focus on key methodological aspects such as teacher–student interaction, use of communicative activities, integration of technology, and assessment techniques. Each observation session lasted approximately 45–60 minutes.

Semi-structured interviews were used to gain deeper insights into teachers' perceptions of modern methodological challenges. The interview questions addressed issues such as the use of

communicative and learner-centered approaches, difficulties in implementing innovative methods, professional development opportunities, and assessment practices. Interviews were conducted in person and recorded with participants' consent.

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach. The collected data were transcribed, coded, and categorized into thematic groups reflecting major methodological problems. To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing results from observations, interviews, and literature review.

Results and discussion: The findings of the study reveal several significant challenges in contemporary English language teaching methodology. Data obtained from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews indicate that traditional teacher-centered practices continue to dominate many English language classrooms. Although teachers demonstrate awareness of modern communicative and learner-centered approaches, their practical implementation remains limited.

One of the key findings is the insufficient use of communicative activities in classroom instruction. Observations show that lessons are often focused on grammar explanation and textbook-based exercises, while opportunities for meaningful interaction, such as pair work, group discussions, and role-playing activities, are minimal. This result supports previous research which suggests that despite the theoretical popularity of Communicative Language Teaching, its classroom application is inconsistent (Harmer, 2015; Richards, 2017).

Another important issue identified in the study is the limited integration of educational technology. While teachers acknowledge the potential benefits of digital tools for enhancing learner motivation and autonomy, many report challenges such as lack of technological resources, time constraints, and insufficient digital competence. As a result, technology is often used superficially rather than as an integral part of the teaching methodology. These findings align with earlier studies emphasizing the gap between technological availability and effective pedagogical use (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012).

Teacher-related factors also emerged as a major theme. Interview data indicate that many teachers experience difficulties in adopting innovative methods due to heavy workloads, rigid curricula, and limited access to professional development opportunities. Consequently, teachers tend to rely on familiar traditional practices that require less preparation time. This finding is consistent with Ur (2012), who highlights the importance of continuous professional support in facilitating methodological change.

Assessment practices were found to be another area of concern. The results demonstrate that assessment methods primarily focus on written tests and grammatical accuracy, with limited attention to speaking and listening skills. This imbalance discourages communicative language use and contradicts the objectives of modern English language teaching, which emphasize communicative competence. Similar concerns have been raised by Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), who argue for the adoption of more performance-based assessment methods.

Addressing these challenges requires a systematic approach that includes curriculum reform, improved teacher training, and the integration of communicative and technology-enhanced teaching strategies. By aligning teaching practices with modern methodological principles, English language education can become more effective and responsive to learners' needs.

Conclusion: This study has examined the contemporary challenges in English language teaching methodology through the analysis of classroom practices, teacher perspectives, and relevant academic literature. The findings indicate that despite the widespread recognition of modern, communicative, and learner-centered approaches, traditional teaching methods continue to dominate many English language classrooms.

The results highlight several key issues, including the limited implementation of communicative activities, insufficient integration of educational technology, and assessment practices that prioritize grammatical accuracy over communicative competence. In addition, teacher-related factors such as workload, lack of professional development opportunities, and rigid curricular requirements significantly hinder the adoption of innovative methodologies.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that improving English language teaching methodology requires a comprehensive and systematic approach. This includes continuous professional development for teachers, effective use of technology as a pedagogical tool, and the alignment of assessment methods with communicative teaching objectives. Educational institutions should also support methodological innovation by providing adequate resources and flexible curricula.

In conclusion, addressing modern methodological problems in English language teaching is essential for enhancing learners' communicative competence and overall language proficiency. Future research may focus on empirical studies involving larger participant groups or explore the impact of specific innovative teaching strategies on language learning outcomes.

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