
**RECONCEPTUALIZING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: A
SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGICAL
PARADIGMS**

***Dr. Depavath Balu Naik**

Department of Languages, UG English area JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru,
India.

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***Corresponding Author: Dr. Depavath Balu Naik**

Department of Languages, UG English area JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru, India.

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ABSTRACT

English Language Teaching (ELT) has experienced a lot of changes during the last 20 years. The discipline is undoubtedly shifting from more prescriptive methods to much more flexible and contextsensitive approaches. This paper offers a systematic review of existing approaches in ELT, probing into the complex demands of a digital mediated and linguistically diverse world and the response of modern language education. The study aims to move beyond the limitations of the traditional method of the 20th century and critically analyze the theoretical development, pedagogical strengths and inherent practical limitations of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Moreover, recent paradigm changes such as the introduction of Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) and the important "multilingual turn" which is defined by translanguaging practices are examined. This literature review contends that the current state of global English teaching is not a quest for a single universal method that can be found. Effective language instruction implies rather a post-method epistemology, in which the teacher should become a reflective adaptive practitioner who is able to adapt his/her strategies to the specific cognitive, cultural and institutional needs. In conclusion, this paper traces the path of ELT from a transmission model of learning based on rote learning to an empowering and highly communicative model, where localization plays an important role.

KEYWORDS: English Language Teaching (ELT), Task-Based Language Teaching, translanguaging, communicative competence, post-method condition, Content and Language Integrated Learning, reflective practitioner.

Introduction: The Evolution of the ELT Paradigm

The story of the history of English language teaching has had a rather intellectual 'method era,' in which English language teaching was at the center of attention for much of its established history. The subject was marked by an unflagging and often uncritical oscillation between opposing, dogmatic approaches throughout the twentieth century. The Grammar-Translation approach, with its emphasis on translation, was eventually replaced by the behaviorist "drilling" of Audiolingualism. Both these historical methods had a fundamental epistemological problem: the language was viewed as a fixed, homogeneous entity to be learnt and the learner was viewed as receiving the rule.

Today language education is changing faster than ever – these old paradigms are no longer relevant. The fast-paced nature of economic globalization, the prevalence of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in international communication, classrooms with high linguistic diversity and the wide use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have radically disrupted traditional teaching methods. Students in the current educational landscape need English not just to access classic texts or complete isolated grammar assessments, but as a means of communication, progress and digital literacy essential for the modern world.

This systematic review aims at critically examining the pedagogical frameworks which have defined the modern ELT classroom. This paper does not simply give a descriptive overview of these approaches, but actively explores the theoretical potential and practical constraints that they represent in educational contexts. This study aims to reveal the current English teaching landscape by analysing CLT, TBLT and CLIL as well as the recent technological and translingual interventions, and thus bring into sharp focus the urgent need to embrace a post-method approach in today's educational world.

METHODOLOGY

The research included in this systematic review consists of peer-reviewed articles, seminal theoretical works, and classroom-based empirical studies published mainly in the last 26 years from 2000 to 2026. Academic databases such as ERIC, JSTOR and Google scholar were searched with specific search words concerning post-method pedagogy, TBLT, CLIL, TELL and translanguaging. The selection criteria were stringent and only studies that directly

speak to the theoretical architecture and practical classroom application of these frameworks across a range of geopolitical and socioeconomic settings were included to give the selection a balanced global perspective.

Contextualizing the Reflective Practitioner: The Post-Method Epistemology

Understanding the current reality of language teaching needs to be interpreted in light of a significant theoretical disruption which took place at the turn of the millennium: the advent of "post-method condition". This is a framework, first articulated by B. Kumaravadivelu, an applied linguist, that proposes that the notion of a "method" is ideologically and inherently problematic. Most of the established methods were created in the highly-resourced, Western, native-English-speaking context and then sold in packaged form worldwide. Through this process, these approaches regularly marginalized the sociocultural and economic contexts of local classrooms, especially in the Global South and other diverse contexts, along with the languages spoken by the students.

Post-method is an intentional attempt to free the language educator from the tyranny of these prescriptive approaches. It is based on the fundamental premise that there is no single, ready-made solution that can adequately explain the myriad of contextual factors in any particular classroom, ranging from learner motivation to educational constraints to culture. The post-method condition means that the teacher is no longer a passive consumer and technician of imported manuals of instruction but rather a reflective practitioner. Their job is to develop their own context-specific pedagogies out of a wide and diverse portfolio of macro-strategies, which they will need to select, modify, and choose from at various times, intuitively and in response to the needs of their students.

Evolution and critical issues in Communicative Language Teaching

The basic foundation of the current ELT is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In response to the structuralism and de-contextualized drilling of Audiolingualism, much of the initial CLT concentrated heavily on teaching students the functional language needed to deal with particular social situations. The framework has evolved today to focus on authentic and spontaneous communication, with the focus on fluency and successful meaning-making over perfection of the grammar. The general educational aim has definitely moved from the aim of "native-like" accuracy towards the aim of creating opportunities for "mutual intelligibility, awareness of pragmatics and intercultural communicative competence".

The ultimate educational value of CLT is its power to encourage real interaction and communication skills. It is a good success in helping to prepare students to face the actual 'unpredictable' language situation instead of just recite memorised dialogues, thus enhancing students' involvement and motivation. But there are also key weaknesses in the framework. It has been well observed that CLT has an built-in bias towards the West and that the mode of participation it emphasizes is extroverted, assertive and verbal. This expectation often clashes with the cultural norms of some Asian and/or African cultures that have historically placed a high value on quiet reflection, respect for the teacher, and hierarchical classroom structures. CLT has also serious logistical problems from a practical perspective. However, in very crowded classes, which is the case in many parts of the world such as India, unscripted pair or group work, extension of group discussion becomes almost impracticable for one teacher. In addition, objectively evaluating a student's conversational ability may be more subjective and challenging for teachers than evaluating his/her separate and measurable grammatical accuracy.

Task-Based Language Teaching: Strengths and Limitations of the Methodology

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is one of the best-researched and theoretically grounded teaching approaches in the field of current ELT and has emerged naturally from the wider communicative approach. The sequence of instruction used in a TBLT learning environment is entirely based around a "task", an activity that is focused on meaning, and that asks the learner(s) to communicate, understand, interact, or manipulate in the target language to produce a tangible, real-world product, such as a travel itinerary, the solution to a logic puzzle, or a mock professional interview. Importantly, the direct linguistic input and explicit grammar teaching are only added afterwards as a means to fill in the identified gaps in learners' language when performing the task.

TBLT has shown great strength in the classroom, in enhancing student autonomy and spontaneous fluency, and in immersing students in authentic problem solving. This allows the language learned to be relevant and very well contextualized, moving the language from theory to practice. However, these are all substantial limitations of the framework. The creation of tasks that align with the linguistic load and the cognitive load is still very challenging for teachers. If the learner with a lower proficiency is not given enough support with new vocabulary words, they may become frustrated while trying to solve the problem and revert to their native language. Furthermore, the use of TBLT is often in conflict with more traditional "high-stakes" testing environments. In educational systems that are still

exam based and give rewards for the discrete knowledge of grammar and the ability to regurgitate it, teachers find it difficult to account for the time needed to implement holistic and time consuming task-based activities.

Content and Language Integrated Learning: Efficacy and Structural Friction

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has risen to greater prominence, particularly in the field of higher education, where global higher education and professional training have grown more international. CLIL is teaching and learning through an L2/CL2 that is used for both subjects and language. For example, a university student can attend classes in Environmental Science, Economics and History, all in English. In this model, language learning is an almost imperceptible by-product of struggling with ideas that are complex and of academic interest.

The effectiveness of CLIL is largely hailed, mainly due to its ability of developing high cognitive involvement and genuine language use in the context of academic disciplines. Delivers a simultaneous boost to critical thinking and specialized linguistic proficiency and gives students the specific academic vocabulary they will need for their future careers. On the other hand, there are important institutional frictions from the structural constraints of CLIL. The method requires a dual-expert: language instructors who are also experts in the content they teach, a combination of skills that statistically occurs very rarely and is hard to build. This lack of expertise leads to the so-called "content dilution" in CLIL classrooms, in which complex academic concepts are reduced and presented in a simplified manner so that the students' language gap can be overcome. On the other hand, the opposite problem may happen: the instructor is overwhelmed with the pressure of teaching the required, demanding subject syllabus, and language instruction becomes a secondary concern, or even completely ignored.

Technological Enhanced Language Learning: Affordances and the Digital Divide

Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) has quickly moved from the fringes to the very centre of the language classroom. The current pedagogical scene is well filled with sophisticated digital tools such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), interactive mobile applications, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms that can give instant feedback on pronunciation, syntax, and written composition and can be highly personalized. In addition, the use of digital pedagogy has popularized the "flipped classroom" model in which the

student learns basic grammar and vocabulary at home and uses in-class time for high-level, active, collaborative communication and completion of high-level tasks.

The affordances of TELL cannot be ignored. AI and digital tools enable access to high-quality linguistic input for everyone and provide for highly personalized learning trajectories that can freely and autonomously adapt to the student's errors and learning speed. But there are many restrictions and continuing pedagogical issues, foremost of which is algorithmic bias. Many Adaptive AI platforms use datasets that can lead to a native-speaker, normalized form of English, with localized varieties of Global Englishes potentially being penalized and an artificial rigidity of language being imposed. What is worse, TELL continually widens the “digital divide” that exists worldwide. In low resource, rural and/or economically disadvantaged contexts, the schools often lack the basic infrastructure, stable Internet bandwidth and modern hardware needed to support these pedagogies that depend on technology, thereby risking the potential to further exacerbate the inequality gap in education.

The Multilingual Turn and the Practical and Theoretical Limitations of Translanguaging

The first and most radical as well as most needed paradigm shift in modern pedagogy is the critical and theoretical re-evaluation of the learner's first language (L1). Contemporary pedagogy enthusiastically embraces the idea of translanguaging as a way of moving beyond the colonial mindset and restrictive nature of "English-only" policies. This way of thinking assumes that bilingual and multilingual speakers don't have distinct and isolated languages in their heads, but rather a single complex and integrated language system. In the translingual classroom, teachers actively invite students to brainstorm, clarify, and collectively negotiate meaning using their L1 in the process of creating the final academic product in English.

Translanguaging is a brilliant way of affirming learner identity, which breaks down the hierarchies of English over local mother tongues that have been historically created. It greatly diminishes cognitive anxiety and enables students to access the full range of their language to speed up deep understanding of challenging academic concepts. Nevertheless, actual challenges for implementation are still significant. While translanguaging is well theorized in the academic literature, there are few standardized and practical ways to evaluate student performance fairly and objectively within a fluid, translingual context. In addition, institutional resistance is still very high. Many school officials and parents insist on having an environment in which English is used exclusively, assuming that there will be no "L1" usage, which is an outdated belief from the time when it was wrongly believed that L1 usage inhibits

L2 learning. Last but not least, it takes a special level of language coordination, inclusion and sensitivity from the teacher to make translanguaging work in the super-diverse and metropolitan classroom, where several languages of origin may be spoken at the same time.

Future scope and Research Gap

Although there is a vast amount of literature analysing contemporary ELT frameworks there are still important research gaps that need to be filled in order to move the discipline forward. Most of the empirical research supporting TBLT, CLIL and integration of AI has been set in highly resourced, Western, or high income East Asian institutional environments. A clear and glaring gap in the literature is the lack of longitudinal studies on the potential for the sustainable use of resource-intensive, progressive approaches in low-resource rural classrooms in the Global South. Moreover, the psychological and theoretical advantages of translanguaging are now an established fact but there is still a need to develop standardized, measurable assessment models that can assess translingual competence.

Future research in ELT needs to make a radical shift towards tackling issues of implementation in local contexts. Future research directions include examining the potential applications of generative AI for creating culturally relevant and task-oriented materials that align with the learners' context and cultural backgrounds, rather than just correcting grammar. Further, there is a need for research on how to "low tech" adapt communicative/task based frameworks to preserve high pedagogical rigor without the need for high-speed internet and individual digital devices. Lastly, future research on scholarship must examine how to best include translanguaging strategies in national, high-stakes assessment rubrics that is, how to help bridge the gap between progressive, empowering classroom practices and traditional, rigid assessment metrics.

CONCLUSION

The global picture of English education has clearly shifted from the quest for a 'method', universally applicable across all contexts. As this systematic review has shown, such pedagogies as C.L.T, T.B.L.L and C.L.I.L have significant advantages in terms of communicative and cognitive development, but they also have certain structural, cultural and pedagogical constraints, which limit their universal and uncritical application in all educational contexts.

With the modern pedagogy, the main message that stands out is that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. The one thing that cannot be disputed when it comes to pedagogical success is

context. The twentieth century methodologies must forever be abandoned in favor of a post-method epistemology in which the teacher is no longer a technician simply enacting the directions in the textbook. Rather, the modern language teacher should be a flexible, reflective professional who has a good understanding of his/her own classroom context. Through a critical reflection on the strengths, limitations and realities of existing instructional methods, teachers can devise local, culturally sensitive approaches which can truly enable students to function in the complex language systems of our globalized world.

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