

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A THEORETICAL–ANALYTICAL STUDY

T. Vohidova

Kokand University

World languages department

t.vohidova@kokanduni.uz

Abstract: *The teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) continues to face complex pedagogical challenges in diverse educational contexts worldwide. This theoretical–analytical study examines contemporary issues in EFL teaching, including curriculum overload, imbalance between theory and practice, assessment limitations, challenges related to technology integration, and learner motivation. Drawing on internationally recognized scholarship published within the last decade, the article synthesizes key theoretical perspectives to identify persistent gaps between pedagogical objectives and classroom practices. The analysis highlights the need for communicative-oriented instruction, coherent assessment models, and sustained professional development for teachers. The study contributes to ongoing discussions on improving the quality of EFL instruction by offering theoretically grounded implications applicable across varied educational contexts.*

Keywords: *EFL teaching, communicative competence, curriculum design, assessment, language pedagogy*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has assumed an increasingly central role in educational systems worldwide. Globalization, technological advancement, and intensified international communication have elevated English to the status of a global lingua franca, thereby expanding the expectations placed upon EFL instruction. Contemporary language education is no longer concerned solely with grammatical accuracy but with the development of communicative, cognitive, and intercultural competencies necessary for effective participation in global discourse (Richards, 2017). Despite extensive pedagogical reform and methodological innovation, EFL teaching continues to encounter persistent challenges. A growing body of research indicates that many instructional contexts demonstrate a noticeable gap between pedagogical theory and classroom practice, particularly with respect to communicative

competence and learner-centered instruction (Nation & Macalister, 2021). While curricula often articulate communicative goals, instructional practices remain heavily teacher-centered and examination-oriented.

Curriculum overload represents one of the most frequently cited challenges in contemporary EFL instruction. Excessive emphasis on content coverage often constrains opportunities for meaningful interaction, resulting in superficial learning outcomes (Harmer, 2015). Similarly, assessment practices frequently prioritize discrete linguistic knowledge over communicative performance, thereby shaping instructional priorities through washback effects (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Given these challenges, there is a clear need for comprehensive theoretical analysis that examines how curriculum design, assessment systems, instructional methodologies, technology integration, and motivational factors interact within EFL teaching. This study aims to synthesize recent international scholarship in order to identify key challenges and propose theoretically grounded directions for improving instructional coherence and effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent literature in EFL pedagogy reflects a sustained shift from traditional form-focused instruction toward communicative and learner-centered approaches. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes the functional use of language and the development of communicative competence, encompassing grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic dimensions (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), as a realization of communicative principles, organizes instruction around meaningful tasks rather than isolated linguistic forms. Empirical studies indicate that task-based instruction promotes learner engagement and enhances speaking fluency when implemented systematically (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). However, institutional constraints and assessment practices often limit its consistent application (Nation & Macalister, 2021).

Assessment remains a decisive factor influencing instructional practice. Scholars emphasize that misalignment between assessment methods and instructional objectives undermines communicative teaching efforts (Fulcher, 2015). Performance-based assessment is advocated as a more valid measure of communicative competence, yet traditional testing formats continue to dominate due to concerns related to reliability and feasibility (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019).

The integration of digital technologies has further transformed EFL pedagogy. While technology offers opportunities for authentic interaction and learner autonomy, its effectiveness depends on pedagogical integration and teacher competence rather than availability alone (Chapelle, 2017; Bax, 2018). Motivational research similarly highlights

the importance of meaningful tasks and learner autonomy in sustaining engagement (Ushioda, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative theoretical–analytical research design, commonly employed in applied linguistics to explore complex pedagogical phenomena. Rather than collecting primary empirical data, the study analyzes peer-reviewed journal articles, academic monographs, and authoritative international publications published within the last decade (Creswell, 2014). The analytical process involved thematic analysis, enabling the identification of recurring issues such as curriculum overload, skill imbalance, assessment misalignment, technology integration challenges, and motivational factors. All sources were documented in accordance with APA guidelines to ensure academic integrity (American Psychological Association, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals that contemporary challenges in EFL teaching are systemic and interconnected. Curriculum–practice misalignment persists where communicative objectives are undermined by form-focused instruction (Richards, 2017). Skill imbalance further constrains communicative competence, as receptive skills receive disproportionate emphasis. Assessment practices exert significant influence on instructional behavior. When assessment prioritizes discrete-point testing, communicative methodologies are marginalized through negative washback effects (Fulcher, 2015). Technology integration, while promising, often reinforces traditional practices unless supported by pedagogical training (Bax, 2018).

Issue	Description	Pedagogical Implication
Curriculum overload	Excessive content requirements	Limited communicative practice
Skill imbalance	Receptive skills prioritized	Weak speaking and writing competence
Assessment misalignment	Discrete-point testing dominance	Negative washback
Technology constraints	Limited pedagogical integration	Minimal learning impact
Motivational decline	Exam-oriented instruction	Reduced learner engagement

CONCLUSION

This theoretical–analytical study has examined key contemporary issues in EFL teaching through a synthesis of recent international scholarship. The findings indicate that challenges related to curriculum design, assessment practices, instructional methodology, technology integration, and learner motivation remain central to instructional effectiveness. Addressing these issues requires a holistic and coherent pedagogical approach rather than isolated methodological changes. Although limited by its theoretical nature, the study provides a conceptual foundation for future empirical research and offers practical implications for improving EFL instruction. Emphasizing communicative orientation, assessment coherence, and continuous professional development may contribute to more effective and sustainable language teaching practices.

REFERENCES

1. American Psychological Association. (2020). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.)
2. Bax, S. (2018). The Cambridge guide to blended learning for language teaching. Cambridge University Press.
3. Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2019). Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices (2nd ed.).
4. Chapelle, C. A. (2017). Teaching culture in introductory foreign language textbooks. Palgrave Macmillan.
5. Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.)
6. Ellis, R., & Shintani, N. (2014). Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research. Routledge.
7. Fulcher, G. (2015). Re-examining language testing: A philosophical and social inquiry. Routledge.
8. Mamatqulova, M. (2025). Linguocultural Codes in Uzbek Cinematic Discourse: A Study of National Identity through Media Language. International Conference on Global Trends and Innovations in Multidisciplinary Research, 1(5), 36-39. <https://tlepub.org/index.php/2/article/view/443>
9. Mamatqulova Marhabo. (2023). NEEDS ANALYSIS AS A MAIN PHASE FOR DESIGNING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP) COURSE. QO‘QON UNIVERSITETI XABARNOMASI, 9(9), 213–216. <https://doi.org/10.54613/ku.v9i9.876>

10. Mamatqulova Marhabo. (2020). DEVELOPMENT OF THE CATEGORY OF MODALITY IN PHILOLOGY AND THEIR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS. CURRENT RESEARCH JOURNAL OF PHILOLOGICAL SCIENCES, 3(01), 40–45.

<https://doi.org/10.37547/philological-crjps-03-01-08>

11. Nation, I. S. P., & Macalister, J. (2021). Language curriculum design. Routledge.

12. Richards, J. C. (2017). Teaching English through English. RELC Journal, 48(1), 7–30.

13. Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). Approaches and methods in language teaching (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

14. Ushioda, E. (2020). Language learning motivation: An ethical agenda for research. Oxford University Press.