

MODERN APPROACHES TO TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. *Globalization, technological advancement, and shifting educational needs have all had a major impact on the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in recent years. Learner-centered, communicative, and technologically advanced approaches are gradually replacing traditional grammar-translation techniques. This article examines contemporary methods of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), such as blended learning, task-based language teaching (TBLT), communicative language teaching (CLT), and the use of digital tools. The study emphasizes how these methods help students become more autonomous, motivated, and proficient communicators. The results imply that contemporary approaches help create more productive and interesting English language learning settings.*

Keywords: *task-based learning, digital technologies, communicative approach, English as a foreign language, and modern teaching methods*

Introduction

English is now widely used in business, science, education, and international communication. Because of this, teaching English as a foreign language necessitates cutting-edge methods that satisfy the demands of today's students. Students' speaking and communication skills are frequently not developed by traditional teacher-centered methods. As a result, interaction, real-world communication, and learner autonomy are prioritized in contemporary EFL pedagogy. The purpose of this article is to examine important contemporary methods for teaching EFL and how they improve language learning.

Communicative language teaching (CLT)

“Communicative Language Teaching” is certainly one of the most important and applied linguistic theories in the recent history of teaching English as a Foreign Language. The main idea behind “CLT” is to foster communicative competence in language learners, since it not only entails “knowing” the language, but also knowing “how” to use it in appropriate social and cultural contexts. Unlike the traditional theories, “CLT” highly focuses on “meaningful interactions” as “means” as well as “ends” in language learning.

Students are thereby encouraged to take an active part in communication during pair work, group work, role plays, interviews, problem-solving, etc., which simulate real-life situations, thus giving them a chance to use English in real-life situations. The use of authentic materials such as newspapers, videos, podcasts, etc., also adds to the student's exposure to natural language usage.

However, the role of a teacher in aCLT is no longer a transmitter of information but more of a facilitator. A teacher presents opportunities for communication, monitors students' performance, and offers feedback when appropriate. Moreover, error is a part of learning, but it is tolerable in fluency-based activities. This approach helps reduce learners' anxiety and increases their confidence in using the target language.

Furthermore, CLT promotes collaboration and social interaction, which are essential for developing speaking and listening skills. By engaging in communicative activities, learners improve not only their language proficiency but also their interpersonal skills, cultural awareness, and motivation to learn English.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT)

"Task-Based Language Teaching" is a student-centered approach that focuses on the use of authentic language "tasks" rather than exercises/textbooks in teaching a target language, such as English as a foreign language. The basic concept of task-based learning is "a task is an activity that learners use language to achieve a result, solve a problem, share some information, create a product, or complete a project." TBLT focuses mainly on "meaning," rather than "forms," of language use.

The stages in which lessons in TBLT take place usually include the pre-task, task cycle, and post-task stages, or sometimes language focus. During the pre-task phase, students are presented with a topic, and they prepare to perform their tasks. During the task cycle, students engage in individual or collaborative task performance, usually in English, and finally, in the last phase, students' focus shifts to certain aspects of several languages used during task performance.

The tasks involved in presentations, projects, role-plays, simulations, and real-life problem-solving situations demand learners to use English in communicative and practical ways. It is repetitive practice in these tasks that allows learners to develop fluency, accuracy, and complexity in their language use.

Through repeated exposure to tasks, learners develop fluency, accuracy, and complexity in language use. Grammar and vocabulary are often acquired implicitly, as learners focus on conveying meaning rather than memorizing rules.

TBLT also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and learner autonomy. By actively engaging in tasks, students take responsibility for their own learning and develop

confidence in using English independently. This approach has proven particularly effective in enhancing speaking and listening skills, as well as preparing learners for real-life communication beyond the classroom.

Technology-enhanced and blended learning

The integration of technology within teaching methods for learning English as a Foreign Language has brought considerable transformations to conventional learning procedures. Existing technological innovations facilitate more interactive, adaptable, and captivating learning spaces for language learners. Technology-mediated learning involves a broad range of technologies including language learning software, learning portals, media technologies, virtual learning spaces, and learning management systems.

Language learning applications and websites allow learners to learn through interactions on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and listening through games and other activities. The application of multimedia resources such as videos, podcasts, animations, and texts exposes learners to various communications and accents, which help learners understand and learn the language better as well as increase awareness about other cultures around the world. The application and exposure to classroom sessions through virtual meetings and views increase the dynamism of learning languages.

Blended learning, which is an integration of traditional face-to-face interaction with online learning materials, has also become popular in EFL teaching. Blended learning allows the student to study at his/her rhythm, review materials as many times as he/she needs, and study outside class. Blended learning also facilitates differentiation in teaching, as it allows EFL teachers to adapt to the student needs.

Moreover, technology promotes learner autonomy by encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. Immediate feedback provided by digital tools helps learners identify their strengths and weaknesses, which is essential for effective language development. As a result, technology-enhanced and blended learning approaches contribute to increased motivation, improved language proficiency, and more personalized learning experiences.

Learner-centered approach

"Learner centeredness is one of the fundamental elements of modern approaches to teaching an EFL, especially since it highlights the learner's role within the learning context. Learners take center stage, while teachers act more on the periphery, being facilitators, teachers, and supportive agents, and not knowledge-disposals per se. The main aim behind learner centeredness is to cater to individual student's needs, interests, abilities, and learning propensities."

Student-Centered Instruction promotes student engagement in the activities presented in the class. Student engagement is the degree to which learners take an active engagement in the activities presented in the class. Student-Centered Instruction values interaction, collaboration, and reflection. Therefore, the learners are presented with opportunities such as communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

By understanding individual differences, the learner-centered approach is useful in the development of an inclusive and accepting classroom environment. The student becomes more motivated as they develop more confidence, as they are allowed to share their ideas, make choices, and also develop self-assessment skills. Furthermore, the learner-centered approach enables lifelong learning skills such as independence, problem-solving, and self-regulation.

Overall, the learner-centered method helps learners improve their involvement and attainment in EFL learning by promoting relevance in learning.

Conclusion

Various new approaches to English as a Foreign Language instruction have greatly enhanced its success in foreign language education. Communicative, task-based, and technology-driven styles provide rich interactive, purposeful, and communicative teaching-learning contexts that facilitate students' communicative competence and self-actualization. For successful instruction in EFL, one ought to employ dynamic approaches with modern technologies to meet students' needs. Ongoing professional preparation of teaching staff may enable them to recognize new advances in instruction.

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