



INNOVATIVE APPROACHES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR BETTER LEARNING OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN LEARNERS

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

English has always been taught to the second or foreign language learners in a formal manner consisting of technical or formula-based methods to the second language learners, causing anxiety and aloofness in them. Sustainability skills consist of qualities like communication, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, continuous learning and etc. The traditional methods of English language teaching may provide some ideas about the grammatical structure and overall concept of the language, but does not really help in developing other linguistic skills like communication, creative writing, enrichment of vocabulary and such, which are important for the sustainable, lifelong learning and for career perspectives as well. The aim of this study is to focus on various innovative and modern approaches of English language teaching, which along with structural knowledge, helps to develop communication skills, encourages active performance of the learners and overall, promotes a holistic and continuous experience of language learning and self-enrichment. The study also attempts to review and analyse various publications based on this subject, and suggests measures which can be beneficial to the new age language learners to face various challenges and obstructions in the way of foreign language learning in the competitive world, by developing sustainable skills such as active communication, creative writing, critical thinking, self-expression, collaborative learning and so on. Further research can be focused on developing such and associated skills development for futuristic and lifelong learning.

Keywords: *English Language Teaching; Innovative Approaches; Sustainability Skills; Language Learning*

Introduction

Language teaching has always been looked upon as a mere subject teaching, rather than considering it as a tool of skill development. The goal of second language or foreign language teaching should be focused on the holistic linguistic skill development of the learners, which mainly comprises skills such as – “listening, speaking, reading and writing”. In today’s world, the word sustainability not only stands for environmental education and awareness for future, but it applies for all the sectors of life from lifestyle trends to education, career and beyond. So, it is very important to inculcate such trends in education that can be helpful to develop skills that will promote sustainable development, some of the sustainability skills which can be acquired through the learning of language are – skill of communication, enrichment of vocabulary, ability of self-expression, critical thinking, creative writing, collaborative learning, and so on, but with the present orthodox methods of English language teaching, the overall linguistic skill development is far from achieved, and rather leaves the learners confused and anxious. In order to bring sustainable and effective learning outcomes through language teaching the primary need is to make changes and bring innovations in the teaching and learning process, educators and researchers from around the world has been focusing on various modern, innovative and effective ways of second or foreign language teaching for a long time, focusing on various classroom process, theories of learning, different instructional designs for the betterment of teaching inputs and learning outcomes in modern language learning. Some of such innovative approaches suggest – learner centric approaches, or understanding the type and needs of the learners, direct and simple method, rather than grammatical rules and technical approaches-based teaching, task-based methods, active participation of the learners, and such. Many research has been conducted focusing on modern approaches of English language teaching involving unconventional methods, technology integration, emphasis on learner centric approaches etc. and various articles and theories has been published on this aspect, soliciting the needs and importance of the modern and effective ways of English language teaching. But there are still some areas which is not been covered in these studies and further needs to be focused and explored. The aim of this study is to make an analysis of the

present works and theories and focus on the gaps left in those while suggesting some alternative approaches which has not been covered in the works.

Review of Related Literature

Seilova Zouresh (2024), observed that second or foreign language teaching must stimulate the intellectual and cognitive development of the students. The students must be encouraged to “think critically, solve problems, and actively engage in the learning process”, the study also states the importance of active participation of the learners in the learning process in order to develop deep understanding, clear concept of the language and also for promoting their intellectual development. This experimental study focuses on specifically the methods of “Communicative Language Teaching (CLT),” Direct Method and “Grammar Translation Method”, with the results showing that the first two methods had more effective impact on developing the students’ communication, reading and writing skills, while the Grammar-Translation Method, which is considered to be one of the conventional methods, and which focuses on memorizing rules of grammar and translation of texts to be less effective.

Chen (2024), examines the usefulness of various effective and innovative ways of English Language Teaching like “Task-Based Learning (TBL), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Content-Based instruction (CBI), as well as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Virtual Reality (VR), and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL).” The research focuses on proficiency development and “language acquisition” of the learners, while analyzing the related factors like the autonomy of the learners, building effective linguistic skills and development of meaningful communicative competence.

Anburaj, Christopher, and Ming (2014), suggests that the students must know the meaning of the words before they use it, while languages taught with the orthodox methods can only make them learn the words without knowing the meaning well, they observe these conventional methods leads the students to lose interest in learning the language. The researchers suggest many innovative ways of language learning like – Enacting the stories, Teaching through games, Teaching through conversations, word games, creative assignments, and teaching by using multimedia.

Krebt (2017), shows that Role Play Method not only helps the students to develop communication skills through active participation in the learning process but it also brings effective learning outcomes by providing a comfortable and much flexible environment for the students and teachers in the classroom. It helps to foster interest among the students and helps them to concentrate better. The teachers are also benefitted by using this method to teach various expressions like “embarrassment, happiness, sadness, or dishonesty.”

Togimin, and Jaafar (2020), also investigates the importance of “Role Play” Method for “English language teaching” as it is a fruitful way to develop the skills of listening and speaking specifically. They observe that as human communication is not limited within a particular setting, role play method helps students to adapt and practice the linguistic skills in different situations in real life context. They proved with an experimental study that the Role Play Method indeed helps students to think and express themselves well and makes them able to construct sentences for communication in the target language.

Babazade (2024), assesses that the blended approach, or the integration of face-to-face interaction along with online resources is a very much influential approach for the teaching and learning of English language, he observes that “the use of technology” along with conventional classroom teaching can be used for making learning more flexible, engaging and also for making the learning experience more personalized. The research was conducted through a case study method which showed how blended approach of teaching can be successfully implemented in the classrooms and how the inadequacies can be eliminated.

Patel (2024), observed that the integration of digital technologies along with the traditional “chalk and board” methods is important in today’s classrooms as these old methods often struggle to fulfill the demands of the modern learners, she recommends AI-assisted language tools like Chats GPT, Google Bard and various other ICT tools to be used in the classrooms for better learning outcomes and holistic language learning of the students, with an experimental research the researcher shows the effectiveness of such digital tools to be a “valuable tool for English language learning.” She also suggests integration combined approaches along with digital support for continuous improvement of the learners.

Sameetah, Malik and Azhar (2023), observed that the second language learners somehow lack motivation when it comes to learning any other language than their mother tongue, it also generates kind of anxiety in them. In order to motivate the learners, the application of “Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT)” is very useful as this method “include efforts of the learners, usefulness of the task, influence in future and contents of the task”. The participants of this experimental study were found to be very much motivated and interested in participating in the linguistic tasks, which also helped them to think of new words, expressions, enriching their vocabularies, and think creatively and critically as well.

Yao, Kanjanakate & Jantharajit (2024), suggests that “Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT)” helps to learn and to build communicative competence in the learners, the tasks can also be helpful to solve practical problems of daily life, thus by completing the tasks, the students not only use communication, but they also need to mobilize various cognitive resources for strategic thinking and planning. They further suggest the blended use of “Situational Learning (SL)” and “Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT)” for providing learners better language learning environment, and for making them able to use and learn language more naturally.

Sabrina (2020), observes that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method can be fruitful in modern classroom and is effective for both the learners and the teachers, as the students gets the opportunity to learn the language with active participation and not as a mere material studied. This method provides a scope of a “two-way interaction in which both the teacher and the

students to communicate”, and which varies from the traditional approaches of one-way interaction, where students only get to listen, this participation of the learners enables them to enhance their own personal experience of language learning.

Haryani and Putry (2020), showed that blended approach of using “Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)” along with “Cooperative Language Learning (CLL)” and traditional methods like the audio-lingual method can bring effective outcome if organized in a well-planned manner by the teacher. Teacher in this process though, acts as the “controller, manager and director”. Once the teacher implements the approach with necessary preparations effectively in the classroom setting, the learners can monitor the materials and continue participating in the learning activities themselves afterwards. Then they can also be able to learn the language naturally and with fun while feeling free to explore various ideas and thinking creatively as well.”

Arumugam (2023), observed the importance of Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) in teaching English language, the study showed this method is especially helpful as it is practiced in groups, so it becomes more learner centric. By completing the tasks together, the learners get more motivated, learns the notion of collaboration. Their interpersonal and interaction skills develop effectively. This method also helps in increasing self-confidence, and promotes problem solving and critical thinking abilities.

Objectives

1. To understand the importance of teaching and learning English Language for sustainability skill development among the second language learners.
2. To find out the need for bringing innovative approaches in English Second Language (ESL) teaching
3. To observe different innovative approaches of English language teaching and learning.
4. To suggest alternative methods and scope for further research.

Methodology

For the research, qualitative method has been used. A comprehensive literature review has been done of various literary publications like journal articles, case study, experimental studies and books. For data collection, contents related to modern, innovative and unconventional methods of English language teaching has been studied and analyzed. For the internet search, key words like “innovative approaches of language teaching,” “effective methods of English second language (ESL) teaching,” “modern teaching strategies for language learning,” has been used. From all the results, the papers about “English language teaching as a second or foreign language” are reviewed. No specific country or region has been considered separately, both Indian and international papers has been reviewed.

Analysis and Discussion

The studies justify the importance of implementing the modern approaches of English Language Teaching quite well, though some inadequacies may be pointed out;

Firstly, most of the studies more or less revolves around some specific methods of teaching English, namely “Communicative Language Teaching (CLT),” “Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT),” Role Play Method etc. even the studies which focuses on the technological support for language teaching and learning are broad and generalized in approach and lacks detailed effects of implementing those methods, the strategies for better implementation and such.

Secondly, the studies do not focus on cultural aspects or other background context which is very important while implementing any innovative or flexible method of teaching, for example, if the educational structure or societal factors are there in a rigid and traditional way then the teachers and students may have to struggle to apply or adapt to some of these methods.

Thirdly, the studies does not bring the context of teacher preparation or ability of the teachers which is the key aspect to implement these strategies and methods, if the teacher has to play the role of “controller” and “manager”, then it becomes necessary to equip them both skill wise and to build adequate mindset as well to be able to promote the unconventional and alternative ways of teaching, because if the teachers don’t believe in the positivity of the methods, it is not possible for the learners to be benefitted from them as well.

Fourthly, the teaching resources needed for the application of these methods has also not been discussed properly. It is natural that in order to apply unconventional methods, the traditional teaching learning resources will not be sufficed, modernization of the teaching learning materials should also be needed.

Fifthly, for implementing the strategies, especially the methods which suggests digital or technological support appropriate digital learning tools needs to be used, which can be a problem in many cases. As these digital tools are normally very expensive and also requires specific operational skills, so they are not accessible to all.

Sixthly, infrastructural inadequacy has not been addressed in the studies. All the educational institutions around the world may not have proper infrastructure which is necessary to implement these methods, lack of funds, remoteness of location, can also be challenges in applying these strategies of learning.

Seventhly, none of the studies speaks about the long-term effects of the approaches on the learners, or whether it can promote the notion of curiosity in them which may encourage them for further studies of the language or life-long learning.

And lastly, the studies are not somehow universal in approach, they are class, country, region, and case specific and thus, cannot be solicited for all types of learners all over the world.

Limitations of the Study

The review has been attempted of some the papers on this subject matter only, the vast literary resources available could not be reviewed.

Not all the articles were available online for free of cost, only the free and accessible papers have been reviewed.

Papers, other than written in English, could not be reviewed.

Only innovative teaching strategies of English, second or foreign language has been reviewed.

Suggestion and Implication

Further research can be conducted on the areas such as - challenges in the application of the modern methods in English language teaching, the cultural and infrastructural barriers for using these methods can be considered and suggestions can be made to cope up with such challenges, also the need of teacher preparation in order to successful operation of these modern teaching - learning process can be focused.

The reviewed research papers focused on some specific innovative methods of English Language Teaching, apart from these, some other methods can also be considered for future research, such as -

The Natural Method, which emphasizes on naturalistic principles of language learning of the second language learners rather than focusing on the structural details, it varies from the Direct Method in its placing less importance in teacher involvements like question and answers, repetition etc.

Total Physical Response (TPR), is the method where emphasis is given on speech and actions, as language is taught by using motor (physical) activities. This theory revolves around beliefs like – comprehension abilities generate productive skills of language learning, listening skills helps to develop other skills while learning a language, the aim of teaching should be to minimize the stress of the learners, language teaching should focus on meaning rather than form etc.

The Silent Way, or teaching language as a group of sounds associated with specific meanings. The importance is given on grasping the “spirit” of the language and not just the structural forms.

Community Language Learning (CLL), where the learner is given the role of a member of the community, they learn language by interacting with other learners and the teacher within this community. This method of teaching believes that language should be learnt collaboratively, as language learning happens best in an atmosphere where the learner feels secure and comfortable.

Other than these methods, approaches such as practicing the language in everyday life, practice to think in the language, listening songs or audio in the related language, reading the subtitles of visual contents of the target language, reading loud, etc. can also be considered.

Conclusion

Bringing innovation to any teaching and learning system is a continuous process, and keeps on changing depending on various aspects like changing scenario of time and age, diverse needs of the modern learners, technological advancement, changing purposes of learning or skill development, and overall to make the learners able to adjust in the ever-changing world. In this age of globalization, language learning does not only enable the learners to acquire specific linguistic skills of a particular language, but learning a foreign language also opens the door of life-long learning for them, as the language itself works as the main tool to explore the specific literature and culture. Education and career opportunities are not limited within the boundaries of specific countries today, for these reasons learning English, which is the global language for communication, education and business, in an effective way, is a necessity for the modern learners. In order to overcome the follies arising from the traditional methods of English language teaching the application of the modern and innovative approaches is absolutely justified, but some points needs to be kept in mind, firstly, the individual difference of the learners, as the same method may not be useful for all the learners with different learning abilities, the different learning needs of diverse and multicultural classrooms should also be considered, as not all the methods of teaching can be used in all classrooms, blended approach of two or more than two methods simultaneously can also be done considering the situation. The teachers should plan to execute the lesson according to the three “W” s- What is being taught? (the content), Who are taught? (Learners) and where it is taught? (type of classroom) for making the teaching and learning an enriching experience for the learners and for getting better and meaningful learning outcome.

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