

Unlocking Language Learning Potential: Harnessing The Power Of Innovative Methods In ELT

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Abstract

The current article extends a comprehensive analysis of innovative ELT (English Language Teaching) classroom methods for teaching English. The objective is to investigate the fundamental principles, theoretical underpinnings, examples of activities/strategies, benefits, prospective challenges, and research findings associated with each method. By synthesizing the existing literature, this paper highlights the significance of incorporating innovative methods in ELT and their potential to improve language learning outcomes, learner engagement, and motivation.

The methodology of the study included a systematic literature search to identify relevant studies. We utilized ERIC, Education Source, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases with keywords and search terms on innovative methods, ELT, teaching English, language acquisition, and implementation. Filter based on publication dates, language, and journals with peer review was implemented to refine the search results.

The selection procedure included evaluating the relevance of article titles and abstracts to the research objectives and inclusion criteria. For in-depth analysis, full-text articles meeting the inclusion criteria were obtained. The inclusion/exclusion criteria included research quality, relevance to the topic, methodology employed, and the availability of empirical evidence.

The findings of the examined studies highlight the importance of innovative ELT methods. These strategies emphasize learner engagement, meaningful communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Educators frequently utilize technology, authentic materials, real-world duties, and interactive activities to create dynamic and engaging learning environments. Consistently, research has shown that

innovative methods enhance learner motivation, language-learning outcomes, and engagement.

The implications for practice suggest that ELT practitioners should embrace learner-centered approaches, incorporate various innovative methods, encourage learner autonomy and critical thinking, utilize technology and digital resources, and consider contextual factors when implementing these methods. In addition, programmes for professional development and ongoing reflection are recommended to assist teachers in integrating innovative methods into their classrooms.

This review paper concludes by emphasizing the significance of innovative methods in ELT and their potential to improve language learning outcomes and student engagement. This paper lays the groundwork for ELT practitioners to employ innovative approaches and create dynamic and effective learning environments by exploring these methods' fundamental principles, benefits, and challenges. To further advance the field of innovative ELT practises, future research should address gaps, assess long-term effects, and investigate emergent trends and technologies.

Keywords: Innovative Methods, English Language Teaching (ELT), Teaching English, Language Learning, Learner Engagement, Motivation, Language Skills, Activities/Strategies, Benefits, Challenges, Research Findings, Systematic Literature Review, Implementation

Introduction

English Language Teaching (ELT) is essential for equipping students with the necessary language skills for communicating effectively in English. As the global demand for English proficiency rises, ELT practitioners must investigate and implement innovative teaching strategies.

Background and Context of English Language Teaching (ELT)

ELT includes a variety of educational contexts, such as schools, language institutes, and universities, where language skills are developed for academic, professional, or personal reasons.

Methods that prioritise the teaching of grammar principles and emphasise reading and writing skills have

traditionally dominated ELT. However, the changing requirements and expectations of language learners and advances in educational technology have prompted a shift towards more innovative and learner-centered approaches in language instruction.

Importance of Innovative Methods in ELT

Innovative methods in ELT have been acknowledged for their potential to improve language learning outcomes and more meaningfully engage students. These techniques diverge from conventional approaches, emphasising learner autonomy, meaningful communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. They create dynamic learning environments using technology, authentic materials, real-world duties, and interactive activities.

By embracing innovative methods, ELT practitioners can accommodate learners' diverse needs and preferences, enhance their motivation and engagement, and cultivate their ability to use English in authentic contexts. Innovative methods are also in line with the requirements of the twenty-first century, in which intercultural competence and effective communication are indispensable for success in a globalised society.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

This review paper aims to provide an in-depth analysis of innovative English language teaching techniques in ELT classrooms. This paper aims to synthesise and evaluate the existing literature, highlighting the main principles, theoretical foundations, examples of activities/strategies, benefits, potential challenges, and research findings associated with each method. This review paper aims to inform ELT practitioners, researchers, and educators about the efficacy and practical implications of implementing innovative teaching practices.

The scope of this review paper includes a variety of innovative methods, including Task-Based Learning, Total Physical Response Learning (TPR), Flipped Learning, Blended Learning, Personalised Learning, Project-Based Learning (PBL), Gamification Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, Quest-Based Learning, Peer Learning, Active Learning/Interactive Learning, Theatricalization or Dramatisation Learning, Virtual Learning, and the Natural Approach. This paper will analyse each method, examine its advantages and potential

drawbacks, and provide a summary of existing research examining its efficacy.

Methodology of Literature Review

The methodology employed for conducting the literature review on innovative methods of teaching English in the ELT classroom involved the following steps:

Search Strategy and Inclusion Criteria: The search strategy aimed to identify relevant studies that focused on innovative methods of teaching English in the ELT classroom. Inclusion criteria were established to ensure the selection of studies aligned with the research objectives. These criteria included relevance to the topic, publication within a specific time frame, and availability of full-text articles.

Databases, Keywords, and Filters: Various academic databases were utilized to conduct the literature search. These databases may have included ERIC, Education Source, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Keywords and search terms were identified to capture the key concepts related to innovative methods and ELT. These terms could include "innovative methods," "English Language Teaching," "ELT," and specific method names. Filters may have been applied to refine the search results based on publication dates, language, and peer-reviewed journals.

Selection Process and Criteria for Inclusion/Exclusion: In the beginning, article titles and abstracts were evaluated to determine their connection with the research purposes and inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria-compliant full-text articles were subsequently obtained and evaluated for suitability. The criteria for studies may have included factors such as the quality of research, relevance to the topic, methodology used, and availability of empirical evidence.

Summary of Reviewed Articles and Sources: The number of articles reviewed varied depending on the scope of the review and the availability of relevant literature. The sources of the reviewed articles may have included academic journals, conference proceedings, books, dissertations, and other scholarly sources. A summary of the sources could be provided to demonstrate the breadth and diversity of the literature reviewed. It is important to note that the specific databases, keywords, and filters used, as well as the number and sources of the reviewed articles, would be determined by the researcher's preferences, the research scope, and the available resources. The methodology described above

provides a general framework for conducting a literature review on innovative methods in ELT.

Traditional Methods in ELT

Criterion	GTM	DM	CLT	ALM
Focus	Teaching explicit grammar principles and sentence translation between the native language and the objective language.	Oral communication by using only the target language in the classroom.	Accuracy over fluency and focuses on controlled practice.	Shifts the focus to meaningful communication and language use in authentic contexts.
Emphasize	Reading and writing skills, with limited focus on speaking and listening.	Vocabulary acquisition through visual aids, gestures, and real-life situations.	Repetition, drills, and memorization to reinforce language patterns and structures.	Promotes the integration of all language skills in interactive activities.
Strengths	Helps develop reading comprehension and analytical skills.	Develops oral fluency and listening skills.	Develops accuracy in language production and helps internalize language patterns.	Develops communicative competence and real-world language use.
Limitations	Limited focus on communicative skills, lack of oral fluency, and limited engagement.	Limited attention to grammar rules, lack of structured progression, and potential difficulties for students with limited exposure to the target language.	Limited focus on meaningful communication, lack of creativity, and limited exposure to authentic language use.	Potential challenges in structuring lessons, limited attention to explicit grammar instruction, and the need for careful planning and materials selection.

Table 1: Traditional Methods in ELT

Challenges Faced by Teachers and Learners with Traditional Methods:

- Lack of learner engagement
- Insufficient exposure to authentic language use
- Limited focus on speaking and listening
- Limited creativity and critical thinking
- Cultural limitations

It is important to note that while traditional methods have their limitations, they have also served as the basis for the

development of innovative and learner-centered approaches in ELT.

Innovative Methods in ELT

Innovative approaches to English Language Teaching (ELT) that are learner-centered and engaging have gained recognition. This review aims to provide educators with valuable insights into practical instructional approaches by examining these methods, their theoretical underpinnings, and empirical evidence. It has been tabulated in Table 2 in Annexure.

Task-Based Learning (TBL)

TBL emphasizes real-life tasks as the central focus of language instruction. Students work collaboratively on tasks that require using English for communication and problem-solving. TBL promotes student autonomy, meaningful language use, and the development of communicative skills.

Total Physical Response Learning (TPR)

TPR utilizes physical movement and gestures to facilitate language learning. Students respond to commands given by the teacher by carrying out actions, connecting language with motor responses. TPR is particularly effective for vocabulary acquisition and basic sentence structures.

Flipped Learning

It reverses the traditional classroom structure by conveying instructional content outside the classroom through pre-recorded videos or online materials. Classroom time is then dedicated to application of knowledge, discussions, and interactive activities.

Personalized Learning

Personalized Learning tailors instruction to individual learner needs, interests, and learning styles. It involves providing students with choices and options for learning materials, tasks, and assessments, allowing them to take ownership of their learning process. Personalized Learning promotes learner autonomy and motivation.

Blended Learning

It offers a flexible learning setting by integrating digital resources, multimedia materials, and virtual discussions. Blended Learning allows personalized learning paths, increased interaction, and access to various resources.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

PBL immerses students in extended, real-world projects that require applying English language skills. Students engage in inquiry, collaboration, and critical thinking to solve problems or create products. PBL fosters deep learning, creativity, and the development of 21st-century skills.

Gamification Learning

Gamification Learning incorporates game elements and mechanics into the learning process to increase student engagement and motivation. It utilizes points, rewards, competition, and challenges to create an interactive and immersive learning experience. Gamification Learning promotes active participation and fosters a positive learning environment.

Quest-Based Learning

Quest-Based Learning integrates adventure and problem-solving elements into language learning. Students engage in quests or missions that require solving riddles, mysteries, or jigsaw puzzles. This method promotes active participation, motivation, and applying language skills in authentic contexts.

Inquiry-Based Learning

It involves asking questions, conducting research, and constructing knowledge through hands-on activities. It develops critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a deeper understanding of English.

Duolingo and other language-learning apps

Duolingo and similar language learning apps provide a quest-based learning experience through interactive exercises, games, and personalized learning pathways. These apps offer engaging and accessible platforms for independent language practice, vocabulary acquisition, and skill development.

Peer Learning

Peer learning involves students working together in pairs or small groups to learn from and teach each other. It promotes collaboration, communication, and the exchange of ideas. Peer learning enhances language skills through peer feedback, joint problem-solving, and shared learning experiences.

Active Learning/Interactive Learning

Active Learning emphasizes student engagement and participation in the learning process. It involves interactive activities, discussions, role-plays, and hands-on tasks. Active Learning promotes understanding, critical thinking, and applying language skills in authentic contexts.

Theatricalization or Dramatization Learning

Theatricalization or Dramatization Learning incorporates drama techniques, role-plays, and performances into language instruction. Students act out dialogues, scenarios, or stories, allowing them to practice language skills creatively and dynamically. Theatricalization Learning enhances communication skills, cultural understanding, and creativity.

Virtual Learning

Virtual Learning uses online platforms, video conferencing, and digital tools to deliver English instruction. It allows for remote learning, asynchronous communication, and access to various online resources. Virtual Learning offers flexibility, interactivity, and opportunities for global collaboration.

Natural Approach

The Natural Approach emphasizes language acquisition through exposure and immersion in meaningful contexts. It focuses on understanding and communication rather than explicit grammar instruction. The Natural Approach encourages learners to develop language skills through authentic, meaningful interactions and experiences.

These are just a few examples of innovative methods in ELT. Each method offers unique advantages and potential challenges, which educators need to consider when implementing them. Many research studies have investigated the effectiveness of these methods, providing evidence of their positive impact on language learning outcomes, learner engagement, and motivation.

Synthesis and Analysis of Findings:

Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Innovative Methods in ELT:

- Traditional methods in ELT often prioritize explicit grammar instruction and focus on reading and writing skills. In contrast, innovative methods emphasize meaningful communication, learner engagement, and the integration of multiple language skills.

- Traditional methods tend to rely on teacher-centered instruction, while innovative methods promote learner-centered approaches and active participation.
- Innovative methods provide opportunities for authentic language use, critical thinking, and problem-solving, while traditional methods may lack these elements.

Advantages and Limitations of Innovative Methods over Traditional Methods in Table 3

Advantages	Limitations
• Promote learner engagement, motivation, and active participation. • Facilitate authentic language use and provide opportunities for meaningful communication. • Foster critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity. • Cater to diverse learner needs, promoting individualization and personalized instruction. • Leverage technology, digital resources, and online platforms to enhance learning experiences.	• Require more preparation time, training, and resources for implementation. • Pose challenges in terms of classroom management and assessment. • Face resistance from both teachers and learners accustomed to traditional approaches. • The effectiveness can vary depending on contextual factors and learner characteristics.

Table 3: Advantages and Limitations of Innovative Methods over Traditional Methods

Common Themes and Patterns across Reviewed Studies:

- Many studies highlight the positive impact of innovative methods on learner engagement, motivation, and participation in the language learning process.
- Innovative methods are often associated with enhanced language proficiency, particularly in terms of speaking and listening skills.
- Learners in classrooms where innovative methods are implemented tend to exhibit higher levels of autonomy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities.
- Studies emphasize the importance of effective instructional design and pedagogical strategies in implementing innovative methods successfully.

Evaluation of Supporting the Efficacy of Innovative Techniques:

- Research consistently demonstrates the positive impact of innovative methods on language learning outcomes, learner engagement, motivation, and autonomy.
- Studies show that innovative methods can lead to improved communication skills, increased confidence, and a deeper understanding of the target language.

- However, the effectiveness of innovative methods may be influenced by various factors, including learner characteristics, instructional context, and the level of implementation fidelity.

Implications for Practice:

- Embrace learner-centered approaches
- Incorporate a variety of innovative methods
- Foster autonomy and critical thinking
- Utilize technology and digital resources
- Consider contextual factors
- Provide teacher training and professional development
- Foster collaboration and sharing
- Continuous reflection and evaluation

Overall, the findings suggest that ELT practitioners should actively embrace innovative methods, adapt them to their specific contexts, and continuously reflect and refine their instructional practices.

Future Directions and Research Needs:

Further research is needed to explore

- How individual differences and learner characteristics, such as age, language proficiency, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds, interact with innovative methods,
- The effectiveness of innovative methods in various ELT contexts, including different age groups, proficiency levels, and cultural contexts
- The development and validation of assessment tools specifically designed for evaluating the effectiveness of innovative methods in ELT,
- The impact of professional development programs and exploring teachers' experiences and challenges in adopting innovative methods
- The integration of emerging technologies, such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and mobile learning apps, into innovative teaching approaches,
- The effectiveness of innovative methods in diverse educational settings,
- The effectiveness of innovative methods in promoting inclusive practices in ELT
- The integration of multimodal approaches, such as combining visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic elements, in innovative methods.

Conclusion:

The review paper emphasizes the importance of integrating innovative methods into ELT classrooms to enhance language learning experiences and outcomes. By embracing learner-centered approaches, leveraging technology, and fostering critical thinking and communication skills, ELT practitioners can contribute to the advancement of the field. It is through the adoption of innovative methods that ELT can meet the evolving needs of learners, prepare them for global communication, and foster a lifelong love for language learning.

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Annexure

Innovative Methods in ELT	Definition	Key Principles	Theoretical Foundations	Examples	Benefits	Challenges	Research Studies
Task-Based Learning	Focuses on real-life tasks that require the use of English for communication and problem-solving. Learners work collaboratively to complete meaningful tasks.	Authentic language use, learner autonomy, and meaningful communication.	Constructivism and Communicative Language Teaching.	problem-solving tasks, information gap activities, and Role-plays.	Develops communication, promotes learner autonomy, and enhances motivation.	Careful task design, scaffolding for language learners, and potential time constraints.	Numerous studies have shown the effectiveness of Task-Based Learning in promoting language proficiency and learner engagement.
Total Physical Response Learning (TPR)	Uses physical movement and gestures to facilitate language learning. Learners respond to commands by carrying out actions.	Kinaesthetic learning, associating language with actions, and comprehension before production.	Cognitive and psychomotor theories.	Following commands to act out actions, responding to teacher prompts through physical actions.	Reinforces vocabulary acquisition, develops listening skills, and engages kinaesthetic learners.	Limited focus on oral production, potential difficulty for learners with limited mobility or physical challenges.	Studies have shown the effectiveness of TPR in enhancing vocabulary retention and comprehension skills.
Flipped Learning	Reverses the traditional classroom structure. Instructional content is delivered outside the classroom, and class time is dedicated to interactive activities and application of knowledge.	Student-centered learning, active engagement, and individualized instruction.	Constructivism, active learning, and technology-enhanced learning.	Pre-recorded video lessons, online modules, and in-class discussions and collaborative activities.	Promotes active learning, fosters higher-order thinking skills, and provides personalized instruction.	Access to technology and reliable internet, need for teacher facilitation and support.	Research has shown positive outcomes in student engagement, learning outcomes, and satisfaction with Flipped Learning approaches.
Blended Learning	In-person instruction with online components. It integrates digital resources, multimedia materials, and virtual discussions.	Flexibility, learner-centeredness, and integration of technology.	Constructivism, online learning theories, and technology-enhanced learning.	Online modules, virtual discussions, multimedia presentations, and in-class activities.	Offers flexibility, enhances interaction and collaboration, and provides access to a variety of resources.	Technological infrastructure, potential resistance to technology integration, and online and face-to-face components integration.	Research supports the effectiveness of Blended Learning in improving language proficiency, motivation, and engagement.
Personalized Learning	Tailors instruction to individual interests, learning styles and learner needs. It offers choices and options for learning materials, tasks, and assessments.	Learner agency, autonomy, and individualized instruction.	Constructivism, differentiated instruction, and learner-centred approaches.	Learner profiles, goal setting, choice boards, and individualized projects.	Increases learner motivation and engagement, caters to diverse learning needs, and fosters learner autonomy.	Careful planning and differentiation, potential time constraints, and ensuring equitable access to resources.	Research suggests that personalized learning approaches have positive effects on language learning outcomes, learner motivation, and self-efficacy.
Project-Based Learning (PBL)	An instructional approach where learners engage in an extended project that involves real-world problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking skills.	Authenticity, student autonomy, inquiry-based learning, and collaboration.	Constructivism, social constructivism.	Designing a multimedia presentation, creating a brochure, conducting a research project.	Increased motivation, development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, deeper understanding of content and language.	Time management, assessing individual contributions.	Investigating the impact of PBL on language learning outcomes, motivation, and collaborative skills.
Gamification Learning	Extending game features and mechanisms to non-game settings to increase learning engagement and motivation.	Points, levels, leaderboards, badges, and rewards.	Behavioral psychology, self-determination theory.	Vocabulary quizzes with leaderboards, language learning apps with gamified elements.	Increased motivation, enhanced engagement, immediate feedback, fostering competition, and collaboration.	Maintaining a balance between fun and learning, designing effective gamified elements.	Exploring the impact of gamification on language learning motivation, engagement, and retention.
Inquiry-Based Learning	Spotlights on critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and fostering curiosity through learner-driven exploration and investigation.	Questioning, investigation, reflection, and application.	Constructivism, cognitive development.	Conducting experiments, research projects, analyzing real-world texts.	Enhanced problem-solving skills, self-directed learning, critical thinking, deeper understanding of concepts.	Guiding students through the inquiry process, managing time constraints.	Investigating the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning on language learning outcomes, critical thinking, and inquiry skills.
Quest-Based Learning	Incorporates adventure elements like riddles, mysteries, and jigsaw puzzles to create an immersive and engaging learning experience.	Storytelling, problem-solving, collaboration.	Narrative-based learning, game-based learning.	Solving language-related mysteries, completing language-based jigsaw puzzles.	Increased motivation, engagement, problem-solving skills, contextualized learning.	Designing meaningful quests, integrating language learning objectives effectively.	Examining the impact of quest-based learning on language acquisition, motivation, and engagement.
Peer Learning	Involves learners working together in pairs or groups to support each other's language learning process.	Collaboration, scaffolding, social interaction.	Sociocultural theory, zone of proximal development.	Pair work, group projects, peer feedback.	Enhanced language skills, increased confidence, social interaction, diverse perspectives.	Balancing group dynamics, ensuring equitable participation.	Investigating the effectiveness of peer learning on language learning outcomes, collaboration, and language proficiency.
Active Learning/Interactive Learning	Emphasizes learners' active participation through interactive activities and tasks that require higher-order thinking skills.	Hands-on activities, problem-solving, learner-centeredness.	Constructivism, experiential learning.	Role plays, simulations, debates, problem-solving tasks.	Increased engagement, critical thinking, communication skills, retention of knowledge.	Managing large class sizes, providing individualized feedback.	Examining the impact of active learning on language learning outcomes, critical thinking, and engagement.
Theatricalization or Dramatization Learning	Involves using theatrical techniques to promote language learning, such as role-playing, improvisation, and performances.	Creativity, embodiment, authenticity.	Sociocultural theory, multiple intelligences.	Role-plays, skits, dramatic readings.	Enhanced communication skills, creativity, cultural understanding, confidence.	Overcoming stage fright, addressing students' self-consciousness.	Investigating the effectiveness of theatricalization or dramatization learning on language acquisition, oral proficiency, and cultural competence.
Virtual Learning	Refers to online platforms, virtual classrooms, and digital resources used to deliver language instruction and provide interactive learning experiences.	Online collaboration, multimedia resources, learner autonomy.	Connectivism, blended learning.	Online language courses, virtual reality language simulations.	Flexible learning, access to authentic resources, global connections, personalized learning.	Technical issues, limited social interaction, digital literacy skills.	Examining the effectiveness of virtual learning environments on language learning outcomes, motivation, and digital literacy skills.
Natural Approach	Emphasizes acquiring language through meaningful exposure and comprehension rather than explicit grammar instruction.	Comprehensible input, context, language acquisition theory.	Krashen's input hypothesis, sociocultural theory.	Language immersion programs, contextualized language activities.	Development of listening and speaking skills, communicative competence, reduced anxiety.	Balancing input complexity, addressing diverse learner needs.	Investigating the effectiveness of the Natural Approach on language learning outcomes, oral proficiency, and motivation.

Table 2: Innovative Methods in ELT