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Haneen Saad Kadhim
Department of English
language, College of
Education, Sawa University,
Almuthana, Iraq

Osama A Mohsein
A) Department of Medical,
Laboratory Techniques,
Mazaya University College,
Thi-Qar, Iraq
B) Main Laboratory Unit, Al
Habbobi Teaching Hospital,
Thi-Qar Health Directorate,
Thi-Qar, Iraq

Innovative approaches to teaching english as a second language

Haneen saad Kadhim and Osama A Mohsein

Abstract

In the evolving landscape of language education, innovative approaches to teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) are transforming traditional methodologies and enhancing learning outcomes. One prominent innovation is the integration of technology in the classroom. Digital tools, such as interactive language apps, virtual reality, and online platforms, provide immersive and engaging experiences that facilitate language acquisition beyond conventional methods. These tools allow for personalized learning paths, instant feedback, and exposure to diverse linguistic contexts. Another significant development is the emphasis on communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT prioritizes real-life communication and practical usage of language over rote memorization and grammar drills. This approach fosters an interactive learning environment where students practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing through meaningful activities, such as role-plays and discussions, thus enhancing their ability to use English effectively in real-world situations. Task-based learning (TBL) is also gaining traction, focusing on completing specific tasks or projects that require the use of English. This method promotes collaborative learning and problem-solving, encouraging students to use language skills purposefully and contextually. Moreover, culturally responsive teaching is becoming increasingly important. This approach acknowledges and incorporates students' cultural backgrounds into the learning process, making lessons more relevant and engaging. By connecting language instruction with students' own experiences, teachers can foster a more inclusive and motivating learning environment. Overall, these innovative approaches aim to make ESL teaching more dynamic, interactive, and tailored to individual needs, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of language acquisition and fostering greater student engagement.

Keywords: Technology integration, communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based learning (TBL), culturally responsive teaching, interactive learning, personalized learning

Introduction

Teaching English as a second language (TESL) refers to the teaching of English to students whose first language is not English. It may be taught either in the region of the student's home country or in an English-speaking country. In many countries, TESL is closely related to bilingual education. Most countries have a national language other than English, and in these countries, English is usually taught in an English-only setting in public schools. However, in recent years, some schools have adopted an English-medium education policy (also called immersion program), where all subjects are taught in English and TESL is integrated into the school curriculum. Non-native speakers of English are expected to learn English at an early age and become proficient in it ^[1, 2].

Teaching English as a second language (TESL) is an academic discipline associated with the practice of teaching English to speakers of other languages who typically reside in English-speaking countries ^[3]. To teach English in a country that speaks English as a first language, knowledge of the language alone is typically insufficient. A teacher should also understand the practical aspects of teaching English to speakers of other languages, whether they are children, adults, students in a primary or secondary school setting, or workers in industry. Training programs often incorporate pedagogical courses taught within the discipline of applied linguistics ^[4, 5].

TESL includes a range of specializations, which may or may not relate directly to teaching. There are school-based specializations, such as teaching English as a foreign language in a primary or secondary school. Industry specializations focus on English for Specific Purposes, such as English for Business, and may include translating or interpreting. Other specializations include examining and testing English proficiency and English curriculum development.

Correspondence Author;
Haneen Saad Kadhim
Department of English language,
College of Education, Sawa
University, Almuthana, Iraq
Email: haneen.saad@sawauniversity.edu.iq

In recent years, greater awareness has emerged of political and socio-cultural issues surrounding the teaching, spread, and use of the English language. Consequently, there has been increasing interest in areas such as the politics of English and the role of English in globalization, development, and social change ^[6, 7].

1.1. Importance and Challenges

In a world that is increasingly interconnected, the necessity to communicate effectively regardless of language has escalated. Engaging in international commerce, migration, studying abroad, and involvement in tourism are ambitious pursuits that necessitate English communication aptitude for both practical and academic purposes. In every social context, the intention to communicate and derive clarity must be accomplished by means of a particular language. The most widely spoken language is English; hence the headway to the language has been extensively gripping. The desire to speak English fluently sparked the notion of English as a second language. Teaching English as a second language involves English teaching assistance in countries where English is recognized as a second language. It has emerged as a sought-after employment opportunity with numerous accompanying benefits since the advancement of the internet and abroad mobility trends ^[8]. Teaching English as a second language is a promising career choice for retired individuals, immigrants, and the youth. Stringent academic prerequisites and qualifications are not obligatory; nonetheless, the labor market is extremely competitive. Wherever an opportunity to teach English as a second language is pursued, it is vital to demonstrate that one possesses or is pursuing a qualification that is globally applicable and acknowledged ^[9]. There is a bewildering array of different courses and qualifications on offer, and the choice depends on personal preferences and the circumstances surrounding the particular job. Teaching English as a second language can be performed in a variety of different countries, cultures, and settings. These cultures can vary from traditional to liberal and influence social dynamics. Teaching English as a second language can be carried out in an urban or rural environment, or in a city, with each location offering different perspectives on the culture ^[10, 11].

Teaching English as a second language is arguably one of the most challenging undertakings to conceive. Non-native English speakers often invest extensive effort in learning English, with varying outcomes. It can be unbearably disheartening at times. Therein lies the formidable challenge. There are usually at least two other significant languages that will either deliberately or inadvertently filter and corrupt the way that English is understood and utilized. The entire educational establishment, together with the business community's insistence on excessive time on the Global English Test, works intimately together in encouraging this distortion. In addition, there is severe pressure to learn dialects of English that are not remotely akin to what is broadcast in the media ^[12, 13]. There are long-standing resistant systems in place to inhibit progress. Add to this the teachers themselves, from the Indian subcontinent or the Philippines, whose spoken English many have difficulty comprehending properly, and it is astonishing that any progress gets made ^[14].

2. Traditional Methods of Teaching ESL

A traditional method refers to a usual or commonly-known

way of doing something. When applied to the context of teaching English as a second language, traditional methods refer to widely-known methods for teaching ESL (English as a second language) which have been practiced and applied to teaching ESL in different national, social, and cultural contexts. Traditional methods, while being generally effective, are also limited to certain aspects of the complexity and richness of communication that characterizes the use of language. Nonetheless, these traditional methods form a good foundation for teaching ESL. Further, newer and innovative approaches can be built upon these foundational EMTs ^[15-17].

Traditionally, several well-known methods for teaching ESL are as follows: - Grammar-Translation method - Direct Method - Audio-Lingual Method - Communicative Approach

Each of these methods above is briefly discussed below:

Grammar-Translation Method (GTM): The Grammar-Translation method, also known as the classical method or traditional method, is one of the oldest and widely used methods for teaching ESL. This method emphasizes the passive use of language, focusing largely on the written and reading forms. It uses the first (native) language as a means of instruction in the classroom and uses the second (target) language much less, while promoting through the native language the understanding of foreign language texts by means of grammar analysis and translation exercises. It considers decontextualized isolated phrases or sentences as basic units of communication rather than situations or interaction ^[18, 19]. The writing skill is addressed through translation exercises which do not have a direct correspondence between the two languages concerned and encourages literal translation rather than textual appropriateness and communicative effect. The GTM focuses on the formal structures of the language and does not consider meaning or context as important ^[20, 21].

Due to its effective teaching of grammar and vocabulary, the Grammar-Translation approach produces a high level of proficiency in writing. But it is often criticized for being rigid, formalistic, and mechanical in nature, and for being inadequate for speaking and real-life communication. Native language transfer makes it difficult to master terms, idioms, and expressions in a foreign language, and cultural differences are mostly neglected. GTM entirely deprecates the use of audio-visual aids and totally ignores the significance of teaching pronunciation. This method assumes as absolutes cultural similarity of the L1 and L2 and grammatical symmetry of the two languages involved. The Grammar-Translation method places its emphasis on thought processes rather than language processes ^[22, 23].

2.1. Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation Method, a time-honored pedagogical approach for imparting foreign languages, traces its origin to the late 18th century within European educational institutions. Diligently formalized, this teaching method predominantly envelops European languages, remaining resolutely entrenched in systems of particular nations, such as China and Japan, enduring till this day. In a nutshell, this methodology meticulously scrutinizes a foreign tongue's grammatical intricacies, defining rules, vocabulary, sentence structures, and synthetic formations to decipher its meaning, which conversely demands an

intricate understanding of one's own articulation [24, 25]. The Grammar-Translation Method designates its tutelage of foreign languages as a "dead" achievement, elucidated by "the mother tongue," comparatively renowned and familiarly discussed by the formative agents. The language spoken is delved into with daunting attention and systematic avidity, its absurdities, inexplicabilities, and complexities analyzed with philosophical profundity, as on par with maths geometrical figures and Democritus' atoms. Each misconception of a sole unlearned individual, the sole language sophism within the community, trifles with much attention and refinement with respect to letters, syllables, roots, terminations, and conjugations, any oversight or inexactitude kindling an uproar and storm of indignation and wrath. All this imparted intellectual labor hoarded with zeal constitutes the grammar of this "dead" articulation. Thus, it is in vain that the "dead" language discourse utterances should be known: neither are the living vernaculars properly grasped, nor their own "dead" idioms. The mother tongue's conception is thus solely reproductive, penning, describing essentially the same thoughts upon objects, either living rustic noises, via Homer, prior to philosophic hieroglyphics, mathematical elucidation, or symbolical Jesurish ingenious contrivances, which finding within the spirit's stratum their own habitation, awaken but profound silence [26-28].

Notably, this educational scheme remains staunchly alive and prevailing amongst Latin and Greek lovers, similar grammatical exactions demanding similar devotion, otherwise, students become more forgetful than Phaeton, and blind than Tiresiades [29].

Within Europe, state institutions of varied denominations and natures would be multitudinous in a single petty continent, every one either neutral, as regards act, academic trend, or protestant against belief, sciences, classical languages, so as modern tongues; on the other hand, naturally embraced, evilly comprehended, misconceived by avid wtlings technology advocates, affording them embittered laughable occasions. Meanwhile, paragonest, and emblematic civilians similarly would exist. But without preconceptions ubiquitously, all would converge unanimously towards a lamentable prudence and limitation; apostates and dishonorable stay safe tenure [30, 31].

Such, linguae Graecae fiunt tragicis meteoribus galliae, populis edictis et horum fautores, subiti interitus, subeunda luxuria et respectu! Paulum desint, et tamen modo ioutadvances, circumficie neque clade, nec cum cura! Translaturum Parthenica? Either ceteris paribus, wiser than Phadra o Criseide grieviers! Your, mittentes toirt omnes quis caram perite puerili, etc. reporters, quatuor generationes duc munera! As sequentes sensum etc. determinati; amphhoratistae onigo et nusi et naturae Germanice in tractata, elegaici! Furie mine! Retranslationes respectively ofona! indignationes! prudences! Confusio [32, 33].

3. Innovative Technologies in ESL Education

Through innovative technologies, educators can break time and space constraints, thus creating new opportunities for students' self-education. Educational technologies in the language of instruction, building on "Internet and Web technologies," include a vast range of workstations, peripherals, utilities, tools, and applications designed to meet educational needs in various subjects. ESL (English as

a Second Language) education uses an integrated approach to improve learners' levels of familiarity and familiarity with the target language in virtual environments, maintaining contact across borders [34, 35].

Virtual reality is a technologically-mediated interaction where a computer-simulated environment mimics real or tangible experiences. Enriched by graphics, images, and sounds, virtual reality provides an immersive experience where learners feel present in a simulated environment. Two-dimensional environments such as chat rooms or MUDs cannot allow wide exploration of the environment or the encoded objects [36, 37].

Virtual reality offers numerous benefits to ESL education. Firstly, it provides a tactile approach to material representation using objects created on a computer and projected through a head-mounted display. Thanks to body-tracking sensors that allow the changing position of the upper trunk and the head, a chance to perceive computer-generated images as if they were real and manipulate them appears. Secondly, technology enables the reconceptualization of space through server-capable globes and environments on a planetary, solar, or galactic scale. The visually interactive 3D modeling brings learners into otherwise impenetrable structures. Thirdly, VR expands the ESL classroom worldwide by ensuring remote access to limitless space. Educational VR databases include places, nations, cities, communities, institutions, etc [38, 39].

Enriched with three-dimensionality, interactivity, and telepresence, virtual environments offer a superb opportunity for immersive and participatory simulation: learners can be somebody else, meet, and interact. Novel learners' roles can position them far from conventional classroom environments. They can become scientists, sociologists, nurses, architects, or business administration experts. 3D virtual environments obey basic communicative language and awareness co-building rules. The investigator or the virtual participant of such an immersion may ask for and receive information, draw attention to details, describe, interpret observations, role-play, etc [40, 41].

3.1. Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality

Recent technological advancements open up new possibilities in many fields, including education. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are important technologies belonging to immersive and interactive environments. VR is a computer-generated environment that can simulate real experiences. Users can immerse themselves in 3D life-size places with visual, auditory, or tactile sensations, so they forget whether they are in the real world or a computer-generated one [42]. AR is the combination of real and virtual environments, in which virtual objects are added to the real world and give these objects realistic sensory effects. Both technologies are used in many fields, including gaming, medical treatment, military training, and education. Virtual reality and augmented reality can be one of the innovative approaches in teaching English as a second language (ESL) [43, 44].

Learning English can be a challenging experience, especially in countries where this language is not commonly used. Also, non-English speaking countries focus on learning only basic English in school. Students learn vocabulary and grammar but have little opportunity to practice the spoken language. As a result, when they graduate, most of them cannot speak or understand English,

even though they are quite skilled in reading and writing. Students who have the opportunity to learn ESL in an English-speaking country often feel uncomfortable when trying to speak English. They can rarely practice the spoken discourse outside ESL classes. Thus, learning English in a foreign environment makes it harder for students to learn and practice the activities they were used to in their mother tongue (L1) ^[45, 46].

Learning ESL through immersion is one of the most effective approaches since it enables students to communicate and interact in natural settings with L2 speakers. In this case, learners develop their L2 language skills unconsciously and learn the culture, traditions, and values of an L2 community through interaction in authentic environments. However, immersing all learners in the L2 community is not practical. VR and AR can enhance immersion in a remote environment in an engaging and interactive way. They can be designed for a small group or even a single user, engaging learners in interaction with L2 speakers and environments. This increases the chance of using and practicing the L2 language outside ESL classes in an enjoyable and motivating way ^[47].

VR and AR are used in teaching languages; however, little research has been done on their effect on learning ESL. This set of experiments examines how VR and AR environments affect L2 learners' understanding of the spoken discourse in English and how VR effects differ in individual and collaborative settings. Due to language signs, VR environments possess all the functionalities of context, settings, and actions that CMC tools have. Also, in immersive and fast-changing VR environments, all nonverbal cues (gestures, gaze, etc.) are captured, presented, and can influence interaction. In these environments, the focus is on understanding an L2 spoken discourse presented without language support. Thus, VR environments can emulate real-life SLA conditions ^[48, 49].

4. Multimodal Approaches in ESL Instruction

A new way of thinking is needed regarding the teaching of English as a second language (ESL). When ESL is taught in a realistic manner and the idea of communication with other cultures is understood, learning takes on new significance. Oftentimes, ESL is taught in a parochial way which emphasizes only listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills with no understanding of the significance of communicating with other individuals in other places. Learning becomes passive, and ESL instructors can easily become pejoratively stereotyped as "linguists." A basic anthropological understanding of the lecture/discussion context is needed which stresses the two-way communicative issues that are paramount in discussing ESL in terms of mode, time, space, actors, goals, actions, and accommodations. The future of humanity may reside, in a large part, on this new understanding of how cultures are retained, if not forwarded, in the current technological environment. Multimodal approaches to ESL instruction, which consider communication in a way other than simply isolated texts or codified languages, may be necessary for a fuller understanding of teaching other languages at a distance. When a language is studied, communication through knowledge representation is often also broached. A cultural world view is also learned which represents communication typically. Such a cognitive hypothesis may arise from these three notions of "language," "inscriptional,"

and "representation." To characterize how language establishes reality, it may be framed in a model theoretic sense ^[50, 51].

These senses include non-symbolic pre-linguistic forms, imaginative iconic depictions, representational inscriptions and graphic analogs, and symbolic codified texts like poems, inclusive of non-graphic forms, manuscripts, scrolls, books, and print. A number of correlates convene in the topic of approach which include the modeling of a setting, paired adjustment to activity, the satisfaction or enhancement of outcomes, and interpretive directs about use (e.g., modeling thought, addressing discourse, or implying medium). Mode is concerned with the type of communication regarding language (including or describing all languages). Foundational work in phenomenological semiotics supports the view that all human or meta communication controls communication modally. Thus, individual cultures modally approach reality in idiosyncratic idioms due to foundational social experiences. A number of individual approaches characteristically implicate several idiosyncratic youngness or youthfulness markers quantitatively, which can confound often recognized relative approaches. These cultures modally occur by inscriptive, tourist, or textual approaches ^[52, 53].

4.1. Incorporating Visuals and Audio

In an age heavily influenced by technology, educators are continuously searching for innovative approaches that enhance the way they teach their students. This situation is especially relevant in the field of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) because ESL students generally lack the language immersion that their native English-speaking peers encounter in their everyday lives ^[54].

However, advancements in technology have allowed there to be wider access to a plethora of teaching resources. Today, many teachers use websites, platforms, and software designed to assist in the teaching and learning of the English language. Although these innovations may vary in quality and effectiveness, the Internet offers limitless access to visual and audio resources that, if successfully incorporated into the classroom, may strengthen students' comprehension of the language ^[55, 56].

Visual aids are elements that are presented visually to clarify and illuminate something that is not clear or plain. They are used with the aim of enhancing or reinforcing students' understanding of the content being taught. Visuals can take on any form, including realia, pictures, photographs, drawings, maps, videos, games, mnemonics, gestures, facial expressions, body language, or any combination of these elements. Incorporating visuals in the ESL classroom has been indicated to be one of the most effective approaches in facilitating learning ^[57, 58].

Visuals promote comprehension, stimulate interest, motivate learners, foster retention and recall, increase background knowledge, appeal to different learning styles, and present information in a more dynamic and engaging manner. Even though visuals may not directly influence the accuracy of the written expression of students, they play an important role in facilitating and guiding their production and organization of ideas in writing ^[59].

On top of that, audio resources also elicit various benefits. They expose learners to authentic listening samples, create an engaging environment, appeal to auditory learners, stimulate interest, facilitate and guide the brainstorming

process, expand their vocabulary repertoire, introduce new sentence structures, and enhance their pronunciation ^[60].

The incorporation of both visual and audio resources in TESL can prove to be an effective approach to promote students' interest and engagement in the lesson being taught while making the learning process enjoyable and fun ^[61].

5. Cultural Competence in ESL Teaching

Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) requires not only an understanding of the language but also of the culture behind it ^[62]. The importance of incorporating cultural competence into ESL classrooms is further evidenced by the growing globalization and interconnectedness of countries. International travel and immigration have increased exponentially in recent decades, with a significant impact on the demographics of the United States. As new populations in America have emerged, with a great variety of languages and cultures, along with their unique challenges in becoming proficient, at least conversationally, in English, the need for ESL programming in education systems has grown. One admirable aim of these efforts is to preserve the native languages and rich cultures of the children enrolled in them, while simultaneously equipping them with the necessary tools to integrate successfully and reach their full potential in American society ^[63, 64].

Because of globalization, whether or not they realize it, even monolingual students in America are at least indirectly learning a foreign culture, one that they may someday understand the language of. Therefore, to learn a second culture, students must first attain an adequate level of cultural competence, meaning that the teaching of commonly held assumptions and perceptions about cultural groups, be they global, national, religious, or ethnic, as well as languages or dialects, is a necessary foundation. Cultural differences among people stem from the ways in which they choose to interact and communicate socially. Among these are greetings, politeness and rude behavior, being indirect or direct, the time frame of business dealings, and appropriate use of eye contact or physical touch ^[65]. These differences also affect cross-cultural miscommunication, as the same behavior can be interpreted differently by individuals in different cultures. For example, a 'yes' response in America can mean that one agrees with a proposal, while in Indonesia it can mean acceptance without necessarily agreeing with it. As a result, cultural miscommunication between individuals from different backgrounds can occur, and ESL students need to negotiate such misunderstandings ^[66, 67].

To negotiate such misunderstandings, ESL students must first notice they have occurred; therefore, they must be taught to perceive and be conscious of the culturally influenced behavior of themselves as well as those they are interacting with. In light of this, a task-based class is recommended. Students first need to pair up with a partner speaking a different SELC (Socio-Economic Language Class) and engage in an activity that requires them to negotiate the value of items from their two countries in a mock business deal. As they carry out the task, the ESL learners may encounter misunderstandings. In a follow-up discussion led by the teacher, students are asked to reflect on what happened during the activity and whether their understanding of the situation changed over the course of it. If necessary, teachers can give hints, with prior awareness of the differences in business dealings and negotiation

strategies between the two SELCs in mind. As students successfully detect the misunderstandings they experienced, they become culturally aware, which is the first step towards becoming more culturally competent ^[68, 69].

5.1. Understanding Cultural Differences

Cultural differences can impact communication, social interactions, personal values, and even humor. Such differences, when unrecognized, can cause misunderstandings and offense, as when someone perceived as a friend unexpectedly addresses a teacher as "you" rather than through a formal title. In a classroom, cultural differences can affect student participation—some students may desire to be active discussants, while others expect teachers to take a central role in class proceedings. Likewise, in many cultures, silence is a legitimate part of a conversation, while in US culture, it is often awkward ^[70, 71]. Many factors create and shape cultural differences, including historical, gender-related, economic, technological, educational, social, lifestyle, or linguistic differences. Identifying culturally-based patterns of behavior can help recognize cross-cultural differences. Social traditions, language differences, and ethnocentrism can also be detrimental in any cross-cultural encounter ^[72]. To effectively integrate culture into ESL teaching, one should start by understanding the country's cultural background being taught in the classroom. Knowing who the students are regarding cultural differences will enable one to detect potential problems emerging in the teaching-learning process ^[73, 74].

Cross-cultural misunderstandings usually contain a pattern. First, one unwittingly provokes an embarrassing incident due to unawareness or ignorance of cross-cultural differences. Second, one may sense something unusual, such as misunderstanding or offense. Third, one may correctly identify the source of misunderstanding, such as accent, vocabulary, or values. Finally, the misunderstanding is resolved. It is important to understand that there may be patterns regarding culture and misunderstanding, and people from different cultural backgrounds have a different understanding regarding the same behavior ^[75, 76].

Harb and Hafford-Letchfield investigate the relationship among social categorization, social identity, and inter-group relations, and suggest ways for developing a social identity theory perspective on cultural competence and its use in ESL projects and programs to promote effective cultural understanding. Some suggestions are offered to aid ESL speakers' understanding of both academic discourse and the cultural expectations and norms related to higher education so that productivity and satisfaction may become the norm in working together ^[77, 78].

6. Task-Based Language Teaching

Task-based language teaching is an approach that draws upon the principles of communicative language teaching and the theory of second language acquisition, popularly referred to as "The Interaction Hypothesis." As it emphasizes the importance of interaction in the second language acquisition process, it emphasizes the use of active verbal communication that engages students in real-life situations and is relevant to both their professional and personal interests in the foreign language. "A task is an activity which requires learners to use the language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective." It should have

its own objective and involve a focus on the learners' use of the target language ^[79].

As there is no specific methodology for developing or conducting task-based classes, teachers have a great deal of freedom in how they design and implement tasks, utilizing a creative process that accommodates specific contexts and responding to learners' interests and motivations. Tasks may be adapted texts or dialogues, role plays, simulations, projects, games, or activities that involve the use of skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The sequence of tasks carries equal importance in ensuring the efficacy of a task-based lesson. Typically, this involves moving from a pre-task to a task involving free use of the foreign language, whereby the teacher acts primarily as a facilitator and a post-task stage which involves evaluating student performance through feedback and correction ^[80].

Pre-tasks are adapted by crunching or simplifying more complex materials that might be used in a communicative approach lesson while holding easily recoverable features, such as particular lexical items or grammatical patterns, that students can focus on and can be recycled later in more natural situations. The opportunity for learners to ask for clarification maintained or comprehension checks of non-essential features, such as a complex structure or word, is usually taken away ^[81].

Language-focused tasks are informed by a personal sense of what might constitute bottlenecks or frequent problems in student performance, and while they may relate the accuracy of the "indirect" or spontaneous processing of students' foreign language output. They can involve textual analysis, reformulation, and the modeling of alternative language that could have been used ^[82].

6.1. Designing and Implementing Tasks

A task-based approach aims to encourage students to use the language rather than focus solely on the structure and forms of the language. Tasks should be suitable for first-year students with at least a high school level of English, whose native language is Ukrainian. However, students' educational background and exposure to the English language may vary greatly. Some may have even attended foreign universities with English as the medium of instruction, while others may have received a poor education in state-run secondary schools with no exposure to the language outside the classroom. Keeping this in mind, the planned first tasks of the survey should be simple and straightforward in order to provide all students with a chance to participate and not feel completely lost. The content will mostly speak for itself, with no specific knowledge of the English language subject needed. In addition to being clear and easy, the tasks should ideally be interesting and engaging enough to provoke discussion ^[83, 84].

Two different types of tasks are included. The first type is associated with particular moments in the lessons and serves as a basis for discussions. The second type should take place at the very beginning of the crowdsourcing and therefore be easier to control so as not to get out of hand. Any pair of these tasks would constitute a mini-lesson. In addition, there are alternatives and suggestions in the discussion on how to adjust the tasks to better suit the needs of the students. Regarding the language level of these tasks, B1 (intermediate) level according to the European framework (Common Framework of Reference for Languages) (2001)

defines the language proficiency needed to understand reference and contemporary conversation, make simple interactions, and describe past experiences or future plans ^[85, 86].

When approaching planned class tasks, it is important to maintain a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. This could be useful for two reasons. First, by pretending to forget tasks on slips of paper, another mode of interaction will be modeled. Drawing attention to students' interaction rather than the instructor's input should be understood as the kind of communication to aim for, rather than teacher-led conversation. Secondly, it is considered bad style to seek a teacher's praise or reprimand for anonymity. Hence, it would show that in a broader approach to education, personal involvement of instructors is as inappropriate as it is for students. To ensure student-led progress, an additional 1-2 minutes should be allowed for the first three tasks, and for those near the end, if needed, just a small commentary should be given to involve students in discussions while planning other activities ^[87, 88].

7. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) emerged as an innovative approach to language teaching in non-linguistic subjects in the 1990s in European educational contexts. It is one of the innovative approaches that aims to provide an experience for effective and fruitful language learning. In CLIL settings, students are exposed to L2 while studying subjects such as mathematics, history, geography, or science at school. The goal of CLIL is not only to promote the study of non-linguistic subjects in L2 but also to enhance L2 knowledge and skills as a by-product of studying these subjects in L2. This duality of intention is often referred to as 4Cs: Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. In a CLIL classroom, students learn about particular subjects or topics and the language used in these activities. In this context, Creative CLIL refers to the teaching of a variety of subjects in L2 that promote creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship principles ^[89, 90]. In recent years, CLIL has spread worldwide and undergone various implementations in different contexts, including school, vocational, and higher education levels. Studies regarding CLIL misunderstandings and misinterpretations have been conducted, together with studies about the advantages and disadvantages of CLIL settings. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a Language in Education Policy (LiEP) intended to promote the study of non-linguistic subjects in L2 at national or regional levels has been widely adopted by countries. In CLIL settings, students are exposed to L2 by learning and studying other subjects such as science, maths, history, and geography, and in some vocations, academic disciplines such as engineering, economics, or hotel management ^[91]. The goal of CLIL settings is to pursue L2 outcomes while promoting enthusiasm and fostering L2. There is some evidence that students' L2 knowledge and L2 skills are positively affected by a CLIL immersion program ^[92, 93].

7.1. Benefits and Implementation

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has gained popularity in recent years as a means of developing both language and content knowledge. CLIL involves the teaching of a subject (such as science, geography, or history) through a foreign language (FL), thus integrating

learning of both the subject and the language. This dual focus on language and content is seen as beneficial for the development of a more holistic type of knowledge, combining knowledge about both a foreign language and a subject ^[94]. For this reason, many educational institutions have introduced CLIL as an innovation in their language curricula. As with all innovations, it must be carefully considered and implemented in order to avoid misconceptions and misguided attempts that could prove detrimental for all involved. Therefore, before introducing or evaluating a CLIL approach, it is essential that an understanding of what "real" CLIL is be taken into account ^[95, 96].

Benefits of CLIL include making use of the new opportunities offered by a globalized world and by the rapid development in ICT (information and communication technology). It is increasingly common to see the space on a website written in many different languages. A growing number of businesses choose English for their company language, regardless of where they are located. This means that more and more people in Europe will be exposed to foreign languages all day long, and that pure monolingualism is becoming increasingly uncommon. CLIL is claimed to support early foreign language learning, as foreign language teaching, when successfully implemented, makes it more likely that young learners will succeed in regular FL instruction. Moreover, FL input in the form of CLIL seems to lead to a more accelerated learning process ^[97]. The findings of longitudinal research suggest that CLIL enhances the development of very basic skills, such as vocabulary and oral skills, as well as more advanced and complex skills, such as writing, fluency, and knowledge and use of more complex sentence structures. In other words, it appears that CLIL leads to a more balanced development of language skills, which still cannot be considered the case for traditional, non-CLIL FL instruction. CLIL is claimed to benefit the development of a more native-like use of the foreign language ^[98, 99].

Implementation of CLIL in language education must be approached with care. CLIL in general education is still in the "experimental and development" stage and much more research into its impact, feasibility and effects needs to be conducted. This implies that any informed guidelines for implementation of CLIL in compulsory education do not yet exist. Therefore, if schools nevertheless wish to set up CLIL programs, it is strongly advisable to choose at first a small-scale approach to avoid major confrontations with and criticism from both teachers and parents. In countries and regions where immersion is used in general education ^[100], it may be worthwhile for schools to consult these "more experienced" educational institutions and to adopt their ideas on CLIL implementation and design. Suitable foreign partner schools might also aid the successful implementation of a CLIL approach at such schools. In designing a school CLIL program, it would be wise to closely involve teachers and other actors who will be engaged in its implementation. Finally, it is credible to assert that raising community-wide awareness of the many benefits of CLIL will go a long way in preventing major barriers to its implementation ^[101, 102].

8. Gamification in ESL Education

English is undeniably the global lingua franca linking billions of people and nations, but to communicate in

English successfully, proficiency in language skills is crucial. Countries worldwide introduce English as a second language (ESL) from an early school age, and to supplement ESL classes, popular game-based learning platforms have emerged to help kids learn English in an entertaining and engaging way ^[103].

Game-based learning is a pedagogic approach that uses games or game elements in non-game settings to improve learning experiences. Gamification refers to integrating game-like elements, such as competition, points, badges, and narratives, into non-game settings. Game-based learning focuses on using games as a method, while gamification enhances existing structures with game-like elements. Both aim to increase students' intrinsic motivation to engage in learning ^[104].

Game-based learning and gamification can stimulate competition, self-confidence, and self-esteem among students, and potentially even prevent school dropouts and other issues—to name a few potential benefits. However, implementing gamification into educational systems is challenging, as educators often lack the skills and knowledge of how to apply gamification in practice, and creative teachers are needed to adapt existing games and their features to learning environments. Also, the subject being taught should not be sidelined by a game. Gamification should not be seen as a panacea or a way to lessen teachers' workloads, but instead, teachers should act as facilitators, guiding the learning process ^[105].

Understanding how game-based learning platforms, gamification, and the intended consequences thereof have appeared and will relevantly affect the ESL education and learning experience is crucial. Generational shifts bring new technologies that can either enhance or neglect the educational experience. Game-based learning platforms are innovative approaches that can improve the quality of ESL education, not only by fostering a deeper understanding of society but also by harnessing the advantages and opportunities of upcoming technological advancements, such as globalization, digitalization, and game-based learning platforms ^[106].

8.1. Game-Based Learning Platforms

Game-based learning platforms emerged as innovative tools for serving and motivating both teachers and students in English as a Second Language (ESL) education. From Kahoot to Quizizz, Playfactile to Wordwall, teachers can create easily accessible quizzes and learning games. Students find quizzes and games rich, appealing, and inspiring, while teachers highlight the ease of use, opportunity to create varied English listening and grammar tasks, and the option to offer at-home homework to involve parents. Both pre- and post-experience questionnaires showed positive results, inspiring continuous adjustment of traditional classes ^[107].

With the rapid development of technology in the twenty-first century, the education system underwent many changes. The lack of teachers or classrooms was no longer a problem. Thus, the new terms "Distance Learning" and "E-learning" appeared, introducing quality improvements in education. E-learning provides more opportunities for a learning process than traditional education. Education became more affordable, varied, and flexible. New models of learning were created, such as synchronous learning or blended approaches, combining traditional and distance

education. However, education did not only embrace technology—it also underwent major changes in terms of content and methodology. Students' and teachers' roles have changed: knowledge is no longer a basis of education. In the Age of Information, the challenge is to find reliable knowledge among numerous sources, process it, and, more importantly, to be able to judge it. Knowledge becomes accessible from an early age, whereas schooling and education should focus more on skills and competences ^[108, 109].

The demand for the language is growing more and more every day. Students want immediate results, they look for opportunities and alternatives, and they expect a quick and easy way to learn. Students born at the turn of the millennium and later are called the "millennial generation" or "children of the digital age." This term denotes the changing nature of development due to technology use from a very young age. Both the vision of the world and approaches to learning are different. Millennial students like color, images, animation, action, and comfort related to leisure time. The use of technology/digital tools in education changes teachers' approaches to the design and implementation of tasks and activities. Competition in education is growing more and more modest. Traditional education is often considered boring ^[110]. Students may prefer to engage in both the learning process and be emotionally and personally involved, focus on practical aspects of the language (especially speaking and listening), pay attention to the work with technology-based materials, and feel relaxed and inspired. All these reasons inspired the search for innovative tools, catching students' attention and encouraging further engagement in the learning process and motivating teachers. Game-based learning platforms emerged as a new way of serving and motivating both teachers and students in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) ^[111, 112].

9. Inclusive Practices in ESL Teaching

Learning English as a second language is an important goal for many students worldwide. However, nearly every group of language learners will consist of students with different backgrounds, first languages, cultures, motivations, learning styles, and rates of language acquisition. While diversity can enrich the language learning experience, it can also pose a challenge for teachers, especially for newly qualified educators, with greater classroom diversity being related to greater reported work-related stress and anxiety. Therefore, it is essential to provide new teachers with effective general strategies that they can adapt and implement in mixed-ability classrooms ^[113].

Language is often difficult to learn, and teachers need to be prepared to acknowledge the additional challenges faced by their students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This can include considerations such as socioeconomic status, refugee status, and parental involvement. When new teachers are faced with larger student diversity or a greater share of disadvantaged students in their classes, it becomes even more vital to support them in using effective teaching practices with lower-skilled, less-motivated, or disabled learners ^[114].

ESL teachers know how to differentiate lessons and support diversity. However, research has highlighted unmet professional development needs in this area. Teachers have reported a lack of knowledge and concrete strategies to

support specifically disadvantaged learners. Simply offering general suggestions on how to handle diversity can lead to frustration when they become unsustainable in a large classroom. A more detailed toolbox of practical, research-based strategies that target specific situations can benefit language teachers. Diversity in language classrooms can be considered a continuum from surface, easily acknowledged characteristics (e.g., culture, environment, first language) to deeper levels that are less visible and more challenging to handle (e.g., prior knowledge, motivation, anxiety) ^[115, 116].

A lack of support from administration, absence of prior courses, limited teaching experience, time constraints, and larger classrooms structure have been reported as barriers to enacting differentiated instruction in practice. Teachers were not only stressed by the diversity of their classrooms, but at the same time, they were concerned about not meeting the needs of the diverse learners in their classes ^[117].

9.1. Supporting Diverse Learners

English as a second language (ESL) learners are not a homogeneous group. ESL classrooms in a variety of geographical settings can include students from many cultural backgrounds who have different reasons for learning a new language, different perspectives on education, different levels of educational background, different prior experiences with learning languages, different levels of innate ability, and different levels of proficiency in their native language. All students feel strongly about their self-image and desires: the desire to fit in with their peers, the desire to make a good impression on authority figures, the desire to be liked, and the desire to be seen as spreading their culture rather than trying to take over a culture. Any ESL classroom will likely contain students who vary in age, vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, ways of interpreting or producing utterances, personality characteristics, learning styles, distractions, interests, life-affecting outside responsibilities, knowledge of idiomatic expressions, proficiency with technology, and many other characteristics. Thus, all ESL teachers should make the effort and take the time to learn about these individual differences and to properly structure their classrooms accordingly ^[118, 119].

ESL learners can be categorized in a number of ways. The most commonly cited categories are: (1) by age or developmental level, (2) by L1, (3) by educational background, and (4) by proficiency level. When making these categorizations, one must be careful to point out the potential variation within groups. For example, students on the low-proficiency-level end of the continuum may include students with excellent vocabularies but poor grammatical knowledge, students with no vocabularies but good grammatical knowledge, and students with no knowledge of either. Furthermore, students with the same proficiency level can vary widely in motivations for learning a language ^[120].

Smith and Miller suggest some inclusive practices that ESL teachers may want to implement to support diverse learners. These practices include appreciating and promoting diversity, developing an understanding of language learning, understanding the cycles of educational policy change, recognizing forms of discrimination, developing professional networks, and advocating for diverse students. Finally, for inclusive practices to be effectively implemented, senior management plays an essential role in

providing resources, support, and a culture of inclusiveness. Therefore, teacher education and training as well as school cultures need to be driven by and aligned with inclusive policy directions and principles^[121, 122].

10. Professional Development for ESL Educators

Continual professional development is necessary for ESL educators. It keeps them current with best practices and research-based strategies and helps them improve their practice. Teachers who engage in meaningful professional development become more effective educators who positively impact student learning outcomes. Access to continuing education opportunities is therefore essential. Fortunately, a variety of options is available to ESL educators^[123].

One option is to participate in local, state, or national conferences offered by professional organizations. During these gatherings, educators can network with peers, attend sessions presented by experts in the field, and participate in workshops by leading researchers. These opportunities are beneficial to ESL educators, as they help them learn about best practices and research-based strategies to improve students' learning outcomes^[124].

Another option is to take online courses designed for ESL educators. These courses help educators improve their understanding of second language acquisition, the principles of effective pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching strategies. Many of these courses meet the requirements for ESL endorsement programs. Consequently, educators who complete these courses are better equipped to meet the linguistic, cultural, and academic needs of English language learners^[125].

Other professional development activities include mentoring by an experienced and effective ESL educator, collaborative teaming, and in-class demonstration and follow-up. Within this context, ESL educators can observe each other's purposeful tasks, discuss pedagogical decisions, and improve practice. Regardless of the opportunity chosen, it is essential that activities provide educators with sustained support and are tailored to educators' prior experiences and current knowledge. This allows them to address issues relevant to their teaching situations^[126].

10.1. Continuing Education Opportunities

One of the most exciting aspects of teaching ESL today is the wide variety of opportunities for continuing education. For both new and seasoned teachers, there are multiple options through which they can enhance their skills, acquire additional knowledge, and perhaps even change their professional focus^[127].

For ESL professionals already involved in teaching, many universities and teacher-training institutions are now offering certificate and degree programs designed specifically for teaching English to speakers of other languages. Some of these programs offer long-distance options, allowing teachers to remain in their current positions while they pursue a degree or certificate. Others are taught on-site during evenings and weekends, while still others encourage teachers to take a sabbatical leave to attend a full-time program^[128].

Also available are summer institutes, semester-long short courses, and workshops offered in conjunction with professional conferences, many of which are familiar to experienced teachers. Summer programs offered by several

university English departments on the East Coast have gained a loyal following over the years. Teachers of English in European countries flock each summer to New York and Boston for two- to four-week sessions on ESL methodology and linguistics^[129].

One area that teachers may find intriguing is the opportunity to become involved in computer-assisted language learning (CALL). With the ever-expanding horizons of computer technology, teachers able to identify, develop, and recommend appropriate materials for language study will be in demand. Given the current climate of increasing budgetary cutbacks in national, state, and local programs, many teachers may be forced for a time to abandon or alter their current teaching situation before moving to a different one^[130].

With the rapid rise in number and popularity of distance-learning opportunities and materials, this may be an area of continuing education worth considering. Teachers able to combine skills in language instruction with knowledge in media technology may have an alternate career option^[131]. The profession of teaching ESL has much to offer in terms of exciting challenges and opportunities. Although it may be intimidating and overwhelming at first, professional development is an area that will enhance both the teaching experience and the lives of students, and it, in turn, will open up new paths for growth and personal development^[132].

11. Assessment and Evaluation in ESL Programs

Assessment is an essential component of the teaching process. It takes place all the time, but its role varies from one teaching situation to another. Traditionally, it is used to judge how successful students have been in learning the items in a syllabus which, in the context of English as a Second Language, comprise vocabulary and grammar items, speech acts, and discourse markers. Assessment is typically done at the end of the course (or a term) and contributes to the award of a mark and a placement in an appropriate ability band. This kind of assessment is called summative assessment. It could be said that summative assessment does not promote learning but only provides a measure of how successful the course has been in enabling students to attain what the teacher aims to teach^[133].

More recently, there has been a growing understanding that evaluation does not have to be only summative. A variety of on-going or progressive forms of assessment can also be used, which involve the students and their learning process rather than just a judgment on their learning product. Assessment could thus be used as an internal process aimed at improving students' ability, language learnability, and overall personal and communicative development. These forms of assessment are called formative assessment. They guide learning and promote students' autonomy by making them aware of their learning needs^[134].

In the learning/teaching of English as a Second Language, many different formative and summative assessment activities could be devised that fit the principles outlined above. An ESL program should combine several different devices of both types of assessment and pilot its creation before implementing it in the classroom, making the necessary adjustments along the process. It is essential to carefully consider the input and the output of the activities. Finally, it is advisable to analyze the formative and summative assessment devices separately^[135].

11.1. Formative and Summative Assessment

A good assessment program is an integral part of a teaching model. It provides valid and reliable information to teachers regarding their teaching and their learners' language proficiency. It provides evidence for decision making regarding curriculum and policy planning. It also provides information regarding how an individual student is progressing in or out of a program and may suggest what he/she needs to do in order to improve his/her situation. The demand for creating an effective assessment program is justified by the fact that teachers cannot effectively carry out their roles unless they are equipped with the necessary valid and reliable information about their students' needs and performance. Information related to these two concepts creates expectation and understanding of what educational objectives are to be realized in the process of teaching/learning^[136].

Assessment can be divided into two main types: formative assessment (i.e. assessment as learning) and summative assessment (i.e. assessment of learning). Formative assessment is concerned with gathering data in an ongoing manner to guide teaching and learning. Summative assessment happens at the conclusion of instruction to evaluate whether educational objectives have been reached and, often times, to give grades. Traditionally, formative assessment has received less attention by education authorities and institutions in comparison to summative assessment. However, there is a widespread growing concern that formative assessment is an integral part of improving the quality of instruction. Such a concern is substantiated by the fact that the educational standards movement, which has intensified the hold and influence of summative assessment on educational endeavors, has, at the same time, raised the public's consciousness of the necessity of good formative assessment. If formative assessment does not keep pace with the increasing use of standardized measures for summative assessment, it is feared the result will be an undue focus on measurement, on the part of the schools, that is mainly dependent on standardized test scores^[137, 138].

Assessment is a crucial factor in any educational program and the teaching and learning process. It provides a method for gathering data regarding what and how well are/are not being grasped. It provides information for decision making. Countries and states develop standards, usually in conjunction with other policy initiatives, and these policy mandates are translated by districts into curriculum as a map of what courses will be taught in which grades. Textbooks, course-provided instructional material to address these standards, are selected for adoption, and tests to assess whether the standards have been met and the textbooks have been used effectively are designed and administered, often to gauge schools and teachers by their students' performance on these tests^[139].

12. Research Trends in ESL Pedagogy

Along with the expansion of the English language as the lingua franca of the modern world, research in pedagogy and methodology of teaching English as a second language has burgeoned. There are numerous academic journals catering specifically to the latest studies found on approaches and strategies of applying the English language to students of different non-English backgrounds. As the academic landscape created by the world of ESL, there are

numerous journals available, let alone the undertaking challenges of creating a publication. Even though the area of ESL has witnessed an extraordinary level of activity, noting some trends may be useful in understanding broader currents^[140].

In looking across the research published in the Journal of ESL, several studies which used some form of text analysis to examine research articles published in a number of applied linguistics journals indicate that there are clear differences of this kind in the use of citation, hedging, and other rhetorical moves in research articles published in journals with different readership and purposes, including journals focusing on English for Specific Purposes and those journals focusing on native-speaking readership. However, such studies have not, to date, provided an analysis of differences between ESL journals and applied linguistics journals. As the Journal of ESL is a relatively new scholarly journal, an analysis of the discourse and textual communities with which it interacts will be of interest to many writing for it and its readership alike^[141].

Several languages other than English are currently being used globally in such contexts as business, tourism, medicine, academia, and international politics. Meanwhile, the question of what languages can or should be used in which venues is becoming increasingly fodder for political debate. In regions such as Scandinavia and the Netherlands where a good knowledge of English has been acquired and a large dose of American popular culture consumed, voices are being raised to protect the integrity of homelands from the encroachment of English, a tongue suspected of imperialist intent by those unable to speak it. On the other hand, concern is being expressed in regions such as Bangladesh and elsewhere in southern Asia where the poor are largely stripped of this invaluable resource by a small elite about the overwhelmingly undemocratic global hierarchy created by such an asymmetry. Even sports language is not immune from such debates^[142].

12.1. Recent Studies and Findings

As the field of English as a second language (ESL) continues to evolve and grow, so too have recent trends affecting the way English is taught and how best to reach out to non-native speakers. One element of this is in the question of integrating culture into ESL courses. As the world becomes more connected through technology and travel, the notion of culture has become broader than what has traditionally been taught alongside language. Developed cultures are increasingly emphasizing identities and voices, while developing cultures are attempting to maintain identities through the influence of larger world cultures. Many teachers have been conducting surveys on the cultural content of ESL textbooks, expansion and growth of international programs domestically and abroad, and the implementation of those methods. Likewise, many new competitions and ESL events are being developed to enrich cultural exposure. This suggestion can be broadened across all levels of schools and programs^[143].

Evidence of the effect of cultural input on language acquisition can also be seen in the recent work of professors in the Linguistics department at a major university in the Midwestern United States. A case study was conducted on three Japanese students and their competence in English, both conversationally and academically, after living in the United States for different time frames. Audio recordings of

their speech patterns were assessed for fluency, pauses, hesitations, repairs, and confidence. Evidence of improvement of overall proficiency as a result of cultural input underscores the effectiveness and validity of ESL programs determined to integrate more culture into the learning experience^[144].

As more institutions adopt these approaches, progress will be seen in the ways language classes address culture and cultural identities. The success of cultural pedagogy ultimately depends on teachers. Their attitudes toward cultural issues and their willingness to approach this practically affects the effectiveness of cultural pedagogy. All teachers need to consider the ways they can embrace cultural contexts in their classrooms and take small steps to broaden the cultural understanding and experience of their students^[145].

13. Conclusion and Future Directions

The field of Teaching English as a Second Language continues to grow and develop, impacted by changing dynamics in the cultural and linguistic shifts of society. As the lingua franca of global society, ideas, products, political views, and cultural expressions are exchanged using the English language. A global village, to use McLuhan's term, provides fewer safeguards against colonialism and imperialism, forcing the pursuit of a native speaker model in settings where English is a foreign language. In some cases, this pursuit is fundamental to personal perception and success in the job market and being an engaged citizen. Globalization also creates anticipated learners who embrace language learning in accordance with the premises of the free market, hoping to create opportunities for and secure access to resources otherwise unattainable.

The turn of the century brought forth hopes for a world without wars, with peace and democracy prevailing under the overarching guidance of Western constructs of freedom, citizenship, sovereignty, and development. English, the language of globalization, was deployed in various projects aiming to create stability by devising local responses to transnational capitalist structures. The knowledge-based economies that emerged in late modernity expected nations and individuals to adapt to the demands of reorganized social and labor markets. Unforeseen consequences brought about by economic and cultural globalization include hegemonic universalization, tribalization of social life, othering, and newly emergent socio-spatial inequalities. When the world became a global market, English increasingly premised asymmetries of access, use, and acquisition. Pushing aside the hope of contributions made by global citizens, social stratification was rendered central according to the notions of "winners" and "losers" in the new global market economy.

For these reasons, the field of TESOL has been renewed by concerns around sustainability. It has become a central issue for scholars and professional organizations alike. Roundtable discussions have been arranged and publications have appeared. A growing number of scholars and professional organizations agree on the relevance of such issues as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Englishes (E), transnationalism, and so on. With this, it is assumed that knowledge of English brings with it similar commercial possibilities, political power, and social prestige, leading to "English" as the result of "the local/here," "Englishes" as results of "the global/there," and, in the post-modern move,

"Englishes" as converged local-here and global-there. Such visions anticipate novel approaches to and reconfigurations of socially imbued settlement, use, and acquisition of English for understanding both the nature of the world and the (personal) impact of power, leading away from analysis, worth questioning, of current traditional and neophiliac approaches.

13.1. Emerging Trends in ESL Education

As the landscape of 21st-century education continues to evolve and technology makes inroads into all aspects of life, new trends have emerged. These trends have begun to shape and define the future of teaching and learning in general, and in second language acquisition in particular. Eight trends that are poised to influence the field of ESL are profiles of a target learner, integrated approaches, learner empowerment, a constructivist paradigm, technology-facilitated and enhanced instruction, program and curriculum evaluation, program and text adaptation, and involvement of the home and the community.

Increased interest in specific language teaching and learning has prompted educators and researchers to profile the target learner and use these profiles to inform curriculum design and teaching. Reports on ESL target learner profiles have appeared in South Africa, Botswana, Nigeria, and more recently, Canada. In integrated approaches, various aspects of, and concerns with, the task of language teaching and learning are brought together, so that the discussion of one concern or aspect informs, illuminates, and develops the others. This idea has been further developed in ESL in terms of integrated English for Specific/Special Purposes (EESP/ESAP).

Various initiatives and projects are currently underway to address the issues of life skills, advanced competencies, and global communication through learner empowerment in second language learning. Learner empowerment encompasses ideas that range from positive attitudes towards the language and its speakers, better understanding of the language system, skills to learn independently, ability to analyze learning tasks and contexts, management of expectations and motivation, to active participation in language policy and planning. In ESL/EFL, as elsewhere, the constructivist paradigm is prompting a shift from an instructional to a learning perspective with implications for many areas concerning language teaching and learning. One implication is the loosening of curricular uniformity, permitting a diversity of instructional approaches in terms of methodology, purposes, disciplines, linguistic and communicative competencies, learning tasks, and support.

Recent advances in the field of computer-mediated and telecommunications have opened up new avenues for ESL and EFL in terms of educational use of technology. Examples of such personal computing technology applied to language labs, computer-assisted language education and learning with commercial and self-authored software are commonplace. Also, in many parts of the world, the Internet provides highways for interaction between language code users as well as the mediums to support distribution and promotion of innovative ESL/EFL teaching products and professionals. Interest in, and action taken on, the communication between second language users, and the funding of research and development projects to mediate and enhance this communication, have increased greatly within the last few decades. In the traditional paradigm and

focus of second language needs, evaluation meant matching a learner's ability to command a language with a program designed to develop proficiency in the same language. Although this paradigm of ESL/EFL examination and test design is far from having disappeared, it seems that, in language use, there has been a gradual shift from the traditional perspective towards a service perspective and focus.

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