

Changing Paradigms in English Language Teaching: From Classical Methods to Using Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

English Language Teaching (ELT) emerged as a professional discipline in Europe in the late 19th century. This paper traces the evolution of ELT from its early methodological foundations to contemporary trends in language pedagogy. A historical–analytical approach is employed to examine the chronological development of ELT methods and pedagogical trends. Beginning with the Classical Grammar-Translation Method, ELT has continually adopted diverse teaching approaches in response to learners' changing needs. Progressing from the Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method to Humanistic and Communicative Approaches, ELT has adapted to societal, educational, and communicative demands, demonstrating dynamic responsiveness to learners across the globe. With the advent of computers, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-based English language teaching and learning has expanded steadily, and in recent years it has increasingly capitalised on the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI has significantly transformed and enriched ELT by facilitating a shift from exclusively offline instruction to blended and fully online modes for learners of all ages in both formal and informal contexts. This AI integration marks a new phase in the ongoing evolution of ELT, positioning technology at the centre of contemporary English language education. Adopting a qualitative, descriptive, and historical research design, the paper attempts to provide a conceptual framework that helps educators and researchers understand continuity and change in ELT methodologies. The paper, thus, offers a comprehensive overview of major ELT methods and highlights the emerging trends that continue to shape the discipline.

Keywords: English Language Teaching (ELT), ELT Methods, ELT Approaches, ICT in ELT

1. Introduction

Today, English is a global lingua franca (common language) used as a medium of communication across diverse linguistic communities. It is used as the primary means of international communication (Crystal, 2003a; Seidlhofer, 2005, 2011; Jenkins, 2007). English Language Teaching (ELT) developed as a recognized professional discipline in Europe during the late 19th century (Howatt, 2004; Howatt & Smith, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2019; Davie, 2024). Since its emergence as an organized profession, ELT has undergone continuous transformation. The paper attempts to answer these research questions:

1. How has English Language Teaching (ELT) evolved historically from its emergence as a professional discipline in Europe to the present day?

2. What are the key features, principles, and limitations of major ELT methods and approaches such as the Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Humanistic Approaches, and Communicative Language Teaching?
3. What emerging trends are shaping the future of ELT, and how is AI a significant milestone in the evolution of language pedagogy?

This paper shows how current ELT practices are historically rooted and how methodological shifts respond to changing social, educational, and communicative needs. The paper identifies the following as its objectives:

1. To trace the historical development of English Language Teaching from its emergence as a professional discipline in Europe to the present day.
2. To examine major ELT methods and approaches, including Grammar-Translation, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Humanistic Approaches, and Communicative Language Teaching.
3. To explore the role of ICT and AI in reshaping contemporary ELT practices.
4. To highlight emerging trends in ELT, positioning AI as a significant milestone in the ongoing evolution of language pedagogy.

The conceptual study aims at synthesizing literature. It is based on secondary sources, including scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles on ELT history and methodology. To sum up, the paper attempts to offer a comprehensive historical overview of major ELT methods since the evolution of the profession.

2. Historical Overview

Before English became the most widely studied foreign language in the world, Latin was the most common language in the Western world almost 500 years ago. From a historical perspective, English was the dominant language in England before the Norman Conquest in 1066, and it was used by the general population as well as in education, literature, administration, and law (Baugh & Cable, 2013; Barber et al., 2009; Crystal, 2003b). Although Latin was used primarily in the Church and scholarly contexts, English dominated everyday and official life in pre-Conquest England (Crystal, 2003b; Freeborn, 1998). After the Norman Conquest of 1066, Latin and French became the dominant languages, with French (Anglo-Norman) serving as the language of the ruling class, courts, and administration, while Latin continued to dominate religion and education (Baugh & Cable, 2013; Barber et al., 2009). As a result, English lost prestige and was largely excluded from official domains for several centuries (Freeborn, 1998; Watts, 2011).

Following the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) between England and France, the influence of the French declined, and the English gradually regained prominence in England by the late 14th century (Baugh & Cable, 2013). During this period, Latin remained the most widely used language across Europe, particularly in religion, education, scholarship, commerce, and government (Burke, 2004; Crystal, 2003b, Posner & Sala, 2025). Latin served as the *lingua franca* in Europe (Crystal, 2003a). During the 16th century, because of political developments in Europe, Latin eventually lost its status as the common language of society, and French, Italian, and English became important. With the Reformation Movement spreading rapidly across Europe, the influence of Latin declined by the 16th century. Consequently, English gradually became the language of the masses. It became the language of education, religion, commerce, and government. This historical trajectory indicates that by the late 20th century, largely due to socio-political and economic factors, English had emerged as a major *lingua franca* in Europe (Crystal, 2003a). When Latin lost its significance as a living language and became a mere subject in the school

curriculum, Latin began to be taught for a different purpose- for the intellectual development of the learners. According to Richards and Rodgers (2019), Latin was taught as a classical language in schools. The school curriculum included Ovid, Virgil, and Cicero and Latin was taught with a focus on only the literary language to appreciate classical literature, not for communication purposes. From the 17th century onwards, the way classical Latin was taught became the model to teach English. Children in ‘Grammar Schools’ were taught grammar rules through rote learning, and students were often punished for not performing well (Howatt, 2004).

By the 19th century, English textbooks had lessons based purely on grammar. Grammar concepts were listed in the textbooks, and rules were explained and illustrated by examples. This method came to be known as the Grammar-Translation Method. English was taught in schools for centuries, but the idea of English Language Teaching using proper methods became popular in the 19th century, and English Language Teaching (ELT) emerged as a profession in Europe in the 20th century (Howatt, 2004; Howatt & Smith, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2019; Davie, 2024).

The American applied linguist, E. M. Anthony in his article, “Approaches, Methods and Techniques,” published in 1963, advocated the concept of using a systematic method to teach English and over time the idea of teaching methods became widespread. Richards and Rodgers (2019) define method as “a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning” (p. 3). Anthony (1963) elaborated on the terms: approach, method, and technique. The arrangement of these terms: approach, method, and technique, is hierarchical.

The approach is based on theory. It is a theoretical perspective and a conceptual framework that is based on a set of ideas about language teaching and learning, and which in turn shapes one’s understanding of a phenomenon. It influences one’s attitude and behaviour towards it. Method is the application of the theory. It constitutes the practical component. It is the series of actions undertaken to achieve a goal. It is a plan for the systematic procedure of teaching the language. Method depends on or evolves from the approach. Several methods may emerge from the same approach. A technique is the particular step undertaken to execute or implement the method. Techniques make up the whole method. A method may involve several techniques. Techniques align with the method, which complies with the approach. In ELT, a theory is a set of assumptions and propositions that explain the nature of ELT; it is the framework guiding the way an ELT class is conducted. It provides the rationale for what is done in the class. A method is the practical realisation of the approach. For example, the Humanistic Approach encompasses several methods such as the Total Physical Response Method, the Suggestopedia Method, the Silent Way Method, etc. The Communicative Approach comprises several methods such as Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, etc. The method includes various techniques. For example, the Communicative Language Teaching Method involves techniques such as jigsaw reading, role play, simulation, information transfer, opinion sharing, etc.

Several factors that contributed to the emergence of different methods of teaching English Language include World War II, large-scale immigration, globalization, internationalization of education, and the global spread of English. For conceptual clarity, the researcher has classified ELT methods into broad approaches, namely traditional, humanistic, communicative, lexical, and post-method frameworks.

3. Traditional Approaches

The arrangement of the methods in chronological order follows the standard historical narrative found in major ELT (English Language Teaching) textbooks like Richards & Rodgers, Diane Larsen-Freeman, and

Jeremy Harmer. While methods often overlap and re-emerge in different forms, this order captures when each method was the dominant paradigm of its era. The earliest methods in ELT include the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Reading Method, the Situational Language Learning, and the Audiolingual Method.

Grammar-Translation Method (18th–19th century)

In the 19th century, when English replaced Latin, Latin Grammar became the model of studying foreign languages, with the main focus on abstract Grammar rules and the use of translation and bilingual texts. This approach to language learning came to be known as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). Drawing from the fields of Linguistics and Psychology, this method focused on Grammar rules and translation skills to teach English. Johann Seidenstiicker, Karl Plétz, H. S. Ollendorf, and Johann Meidinger were some of the leading proponents of this Method (Richards & Rodgers, 2019). This method was first called the ‘Prussian Method,’ as it originated from the German scholarship, where the earliest proponents of this method were the German scholars. It was also called the ‘Classical Method’ as it was earlier used to teach classical languages, Latin and Greek (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2018).

Grammar-Translation is a method of learning a language through grammar rules and translation, where accuracy is emphasized. The target language is taught using the native language and translation. Grammar is taught through deductive methods, where rules are explained and then examples are given to illustrate the usage of grammar rules. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018) explain that the “[Grammar-Translation] method was used for the purpose of helping students to read and appreciate foreign language literature” (p. 13). According to this method, the main purpose of learning a language is to be able to read literature in that language. Successful translation is an indicator of language proficiency. Communication is not the goal of learning a foreign language. Grammar, reading, and writing are considered important but listening and speaking, especially pronunciation, are ignored. Deductive methods and memorization are encouraged (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2018).

The Grammar-Translation Method dominated ELT from the 1840s to the 1940s. Learners translate sentences from the foreign language to their own language and vice versa to understand grammar and vocabulary. As discussed above, GTM emphasizes reading and translating texts, and extensive memorization of vocabulary lists and grammar rules. Grammar is central to understanding and translating written texts. However, brutal punishment at schools rendered language learning a dreadful experience for students. Despite its neglect of two main communication skills- speaking and listening skills- it continues to be used by some teachers because this was the method used by their teachers, and it helps teachers assert authority in large classes. In Europe, during the 19th century, criticism of the Grammar-Translation Method slowly spread across several countries and sowed the seeds of novel ways of teaching languages.

The Reform Movement (1880s to early 20th century)

In the mid-19th century, the Grammar-Translation Method began to lose its popularity because of its many drawbacks. According to Richards and Rodgers (2019), language teachers such as C. Marcel and F. Gouin in France and T. Prendergast in England came up with innovative ideas in language teaching. Marcel used the way a child learns a language as the basis for language teaching, while Prendergast was the first to assert that children use contextual cues to understand sentences and that they use memorized and repeated phrases in speaking. He devised the first ‘structural syllabus,’ proposing that learners should be first taught the basic structural patterns in a language. He came up with the famous Gouin series, using situations to organize oral language. His emphasis on the use of context, gestures, and actions to teach language later paved the way for ‘Situational Language Teaching’ and ‘Total Physical Response.’ Although Marcel,

Prendergast and Gouin recognized the importance of child language learning and spoken language, their ideas did not contribute much to the practical teaching methods (Richards & Rodgers, 2019). Teachers and linguists gradually started to express their dissatisfaction with the Grammar-Translation Method and highlighted the necessity for fresh methods of language teaching. This paved the way for the Reform Movement in ELT.

From the 1880s onwards, linguists Henry Sweet in England, Wilhelm Victor in Germany, and Paul Passy in France led the Reform Movement. During the Reform Movement, Linguistics was revitalized, Phonetics emerged as a scientific discipline, the International Phonetic Association (IPA) was founded in 1886, and the International Phonetic Alphabet was developed. According to the Reform Movement, spoken language, correct pronunciation, and conversational skills were important. Inductive methods of teaching grammar were encouraged. (Richards & Rodgers, 2019). The Reform movement led by Sweet, Victor, and Passy paved the way for the emergence of the Direct Method.

Direct Method (Late 19th–early 20th century)

The Direct Method is one of the most popular ELT methods. It developed in the mid-19th century as a result of dissatisfaction with the Grammar-Translation Method. It was the outcome of the Reform Movement (Harmer, 2015). Lambert Sauveur and Maximilian Berlitz were its chief proponents. Berlitz schools adopted the Direct Method to teach English, and over time, this method came to be known as the ‘Berlitz method.’

In the Direct Method, English is taught using only the target language; the mother tongue is not used, and students are not forced to learn through translation. Diller (1978) asserts that the most fundamental rule in the Direct Method is: No translation is allowed. In fact, the Direct Method receives its name from the fact that meaning is to be conveyed directly in the target language through the use of demonstration and visual aids, with no recourse to the students' native language (as cited in Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2018, p. 25).

Some of the principles of the Direct Method, as outlined by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018), include the following points: The Direct Method encourages that reading in the target language is taught from the beginning; teachers need not explain but demonstrate using the realia in the classroom; the use of the native language is avoided. The goal of learning a foreign language is communication. Grammar is taught through inductive methods. Pronunciation and writing skills are very important (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2018).

The Direct Method is also called the ‘Natural Method’ as it emphasises teaching and learning only in the target language. It does not allow for the use of the native tongue in the teaching learning process. It opposes the use of translation. It requires students to respond naturally to the questions in the target language. Unlike the Grammar-Translation Method, which emphasized only reading and writing, the Direct Method gave importance to listening and speaking. It highlighted the value of oral training and learning of foreign languages and encouraged more interaction in the classroom. It recommends the inductive approach of teaching grammar, where learners infer rules from exposure to the spoken language. There is a huge emphasis on oral communication in the target language to reinforce grammar usage. It aims at immersion in the target language through listening and speaking practice. It is believed that more exposure to the target language would improve communication skills, fluency, and pronunciation. It promotes the use of the target language (second language/ L2) through demonstration, action, dramatization, and the use of teaching aids like pictures. Teachers encourage the students to frame their

questions in English and give answers in English. This method does not recommend punishment for mistakes. The teacher served as a partner in learning without resorting to punishment for lapses in learning. It emphasises the learners' exposure to the target language to train the learners in the target language. Students interact more in the target language. The inductive approach of teaching grammar proved to be highly effective. Besides reading and writing, listening and speaking skills were given importance. Students improved their communication skills in English. It became very popular and continues to be practised even today.

The Direct Method came as a relief from the traditional Grammar-Translation Method. However, it required teachers who were highly proficient in spoken English. The Direct Method proved to be successful in non-government language institutes, such as the language schools of the Berlitz chain, where learners could pay high fees for native-speaking teachers. Not all schools could arrange for native speakers. Moreover, reading and writing- two most important communication skills were ignored in the Direct Method. Additionally, students were prevented from using their mother tongue, which created problems in comprehension. Sometimes the teachers went to extremes in explaining a simple concept in the second language. It was realized by both teachers and students that some concepts could be explained easily in the mother tongue, saving a lot of time. Increased exposure to the complex target language became too much to handle for the students. Taken together, these developments suggest that the Direct Method required highly qualified and trained teachers, especially native teachers, who were proficient in spoken English. Learners found the target language too complex; they experienced comprehension problems due to a lack of use of their mother tongue. The teaching-learning process was time-consuming and required additional expenses for the teaching aids. The Direct Method was seen as too difficult for schools to implement (Richards & Rodgers, 2019). Owing to its several demerits, it began to lose its popularity with both teachers and students.

Reading Method (1920s-1940s)

According to Harmer (2015), Michael Philip West, a British linguist who worked in India in the early 20th century and focused on the needs of learners who mainly required English for reading, came up with the 'Reading Method,' also called the 'West Method,' emphasizing the importance of reading. It emerged partly as a reaction to Grammar-Translation and oral-drill methods, especially in large, multilingual, and resource-poor classrooms where extensive oral work was difficult.

Michael West devised the core approach, emphasizing graded reading texts with a great focus on core vocabulary. In 1929, Algernon Coleman, an American educator, conducted a survey to evaluate modern foreign language teaching in U.S. schools and colleges and proposed a shift in objectives from oral fluency to reading comprehension as the central, realistic goal of school language instruction (Coleman, 1929). The Coleman Report reinforces the Reading Method by advocating reading over speaking for school-level foreign language programs.

West (1960) distinguished between intensive reading and extensive reading. Intensive reading is detailed, comprehensive, and thorough reading, like detailed reading for exams, and extensive reading is reading for pleasure and entertainment, like reading magazines and storybooks. The classroom practice includes the use of intensive reading of short passages for close study of vocabulary and structures, alongside extensive reading of longer texts for general understanding and pleasure. Comprehension questions, vocabulary explanation, and limited discussion are used, but speaking practice is usually minimal and not the main aim.

The West Method makes reading comprehension the central goal and main means of language learning. It was widely used where learners primarily needed English to access written texts (e.g., academic or professional materials). The Reading Method treats reading as the primary skill to be taught, with listening, speaking, and writing given much less attention. Learners are expected to acquire grammar and vocabulary mainly through exposure to written texts rather than through explicit grammar teaching or oral drills. Carefully graded textbooks are used so that vocabulary and structures are introduced step by step, building on what learners already know. New words are learned through repeated encounters in meaningful texts, avoiding long decontextualized word lists. Grammar is noticed and clarified as it appears in texts rather than taught as a separate system.

The Reading Method is appropriate for learners who mainly need reading skills for exams, higher education, or professional purposes. It is practical in large classes and low-resource contexts, because silent reading and graded readers reduce the need for specialized equipment and intensive oral work. It neglects speaking and listening skills, so that learners may become strong readers but as a result, they become weak communicators in oral interaction. It is considered outdated in contemporary communicative ELT, which aims at balanced development of all four skills.

Situational Language Teaching (1920s–1960s)

Situational Language Teaching (SLT), also called the Oral Approach, is a structural, speech-based method developed by British applied linguists between the 1930s and 1960s. It emphasizes teaching grammatical structures and high-frequency vocabulary through carefully designed classroom situations that make meaning clear and promote accurate oral use of language. Popularised in the 1930s by Harold E. Palmer and A. S. Hornby, Situational Language Teaching focuses on reading skills and vocabulary. Spoken language is the basis of any language. This is, therefore, often referred to as the Oral Approach in its early stages (1930s) before becoming ‘Situational’ in the 1950s/60s in the UK.

SLT is grounded in a structural view of language: language as a system of grammatical patterns and sentence structures that can be taught step by step. It draws on Behaviorist Learning theory, viewing language learning as habit formation through repetition, imitation, and immediate correction of errors. It is useful to achieve practical command of the four skills, with particular priority to speaking and listening, and to get accurate control of basic sentence patterns, pronunciation, and high-frequency vocabulary as learners can respond quickly and correctly in everyday situations.

Richards and Rodgers (2019) explain that in this method, “teaching begins with spoken language. Material is taught orally before it is presented in written form. The target language is the language of the classroom” (p. 57). Grammar concepts are introduced in a graded manner, according to the situations. Influenced by the Behaviourist theory, this method follows an inductive method of teaching language. The focus is on listening and speaking skills. Students first develop conversational skills and progress to writing skills at a later stage.

New structures and vocabulary are always introduced in meaningful, real or imagined situations. Oral presentation and practice come first; reading and writing follow after students can handle the language orally. Extensive choral and individual repetition, substitution drills, and question–answer drills are used to fix correct habits and avoid errors. Syllabuses are based on frequency counts of vocabulary and systematic grading of grammatical structures from simple to complex. A usual SLT lesson begins with stress, rhythm, and intonation work, then revision of previous material.

The teacher presents a new language in a clear situation (using objects, pictures, actions), then leads oral drills; finally, learners may do brief reading or written exercises to reinforce the structures. The teacher

plays a central, highly controlled role as model, presenter of situations, and error corrector. Learners mainly listen, repeat, respond to cues, and gradually produce sentences in slightly freer tasks once patterns are established. Visual aids, realia, and structurally organized textbooks are important to create situations and provide graded practice. It provides clear structure and intensive practice in basic grammar and vocabulary, which can be motivating and effective in large, exam-oriented classes. It emphasizes contextualized language use instead of isolated grammar rules, aiding comprehension and retention.

SLT is strongly teacher-centered and drill-based, leaving limited space for genuine communication or learner creativity. Later criticism (influenced by Chomsky and communicative approaches) argued that habit formation is insufficient to explain how learners produce novel sentences and develop communicative competence. While Situational Language Teaching provided structured oral practice through situational contexts, its reliance on drills and habit formation has largely given way to more humanistic, communicative, and learner-centered approaches in modern ELT.

Audio-Lingual Method (1940s–1960s)

In ELT, drawing from Linguistics and Psychology, different theories have led to different approaches in teaching English. The Structural Approach is one such approach in teaching English that emerged from the Structuralism Theory. The behaviourists, such as B. F. Skinner and Edward Thorndike, emphasised the role of behaviour in learning, where they defined learning as a change in behaviour as a result of conditioning through reinforcement. According to the Structural Approach, structure is more important than meaning as form takes precedence over substance. When Structuralism became popular as a theory, the Audio-Lingual method gained prominence. Focus on learning and understanding structures and forms paved the way for the Audio-Lingual Method, which emphasises form, structure, inductive grammar, and oral skills- listening and speaking. Language is primarily spoken, not written, so the Audio-lingual Method focuses on listening and speaking with little importance to reading and writing. The LSRW (Listening Speaking Reading Writing) sequence came up during this method.

The Audio-Lingual Method was also called the ‘Army Method’ as it emerged in response to the requirement of the soldiers for interaction to be able to send and receive messages. However, as the United States entered World War II, it had a huge influence on ELT. A special language training program was set up by the US government to provide the administration with a workforce fluent in many languages. They wanted the staff to work as interpreters and translators. Upon the directives of the government, the US universities launched foreign language training courses for the armed forces. Consequently, the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was established in 1942. Fifty-five American universities implemented the Program. The purpose was to train learners to acquire proficiency in speaking some foreign languages (Richards and Rodgers, 2019).

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018) point out, “Charles Fries (1945) of the University of Michigan led the way in applying principles from structural linguistics in developing the method. and for this reason, it has sometimes been referred to as the Michigan Method” (p. 35). The International Phonetic Alphabet was followed by the University of Michigan. It adopted techniques such as repeated dialogue, gap filling in dialogue, repetition, drills, chain drills, single slot substitution drill, multiple slot substitution drill, and games. Some of the principles of the Audio-Lingual Method, as outlined by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018), include the following points: Language learning is like habit formation. Learners must imitate the pronunciation of the teacher. The teacher should be a good role model. Native-like pronunciation is targeted. Errors are corrected immediately. Learning a foreign language is similar to learning a native language. Rules need not be memorized. Spoken language is very important. Larsen-

Freeman and Anderson (2018) further add, “The 'natural order'- the order children follow (when learning their native language) of skill acquisition is: listening, speaking, reading and writing. (p. 44). Memorisation and pattern drills are practised. Successful responses are immediately reinforced. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018), “There is student- to-student interaction in chain drills or when students take different roles in dialogues, but this interaction is teacher-directed. Most of the interaction is between teacher and students and is initiated by the teacher” (p. 45). By the 1960s, Audiolingualism became highly popular and was adopted to teach English as a second language. However, language trainers were not able to achieve the objectives. Learners were not able to employ skills learned through Audiolingualism in real-world communication. Moreover, the audiolingual method was found to be dull and uninteresting (Richards and Rodgers, 2019). The method was teacher-centred, where students imitated the teacher model or tapes. Students found it too mechanical and uninteresting. Grammar was not given much importance. Because of all these drawbacks and a lack of focus on reading and writing, this method began to lose its popularity, paving the way for the emergence of other new methods in ELT.

4. Humanistic Approaches

Humanistic Methods (or Designer Methods) represent a paradigm shift in the 1970s from behaviorism (habit formation) to holism. These methods prioritize the ‘whole person,’ integrating the learner's emotional (affective), social, and physical needs with their cognitive development. According to Richards and Rodgers (2019), the core of these methods is rooted in Humanistic Psychology, specifically the contributions of the psychologists Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers and the linguist Stephen Krashen. The teacher moves from being a ‘drill sergeant’ (as in Audiolingualism) to a facilitator or a counsellor. These methods were the first to formally recognize that emotion is as important as syntax. If a student feels threatened, the cognitive processing of language stops. These methods transfer the power in the classroom to the students. Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, The Silent Way, and Community Language Learning are often grouped as ‘The Designer Methods’ because they were very specific, niche, and centred on the learner's psychology (Richards & Rodgers, 2019).

Total Physical Response Method (1960s–1970s)

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method developed by James J. Asher, a Professor of Psychology at San Jose State University, California, in the 1960s–1970s. Total Physical Response (TPR) is an ELT method based on the relationship between speech and action. It links verbal input to physical movement for natural comprehension (Asher, 1969). Asher believed that children learn language primarily from instructions given to them, and so, the learners of a foreign language could use the same principle of the coordination between speech and action (Harmer, 2015). His Total Physical Response Method is based on humanistic learning theory. Asher drew from studies of child language acquisition and first-trial learning, where immediate action reinforces memory for vocabulary, grammar, and idioms. TPR emerged as a reaction to stress-heavy methods, prioritizing fun, low-risk input for beginners, especially young learners or multilingual classrooms.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2019), the Total Physical Response Method uses physical (motor) activity to teach language. Asher believed that the target language could be taught through gestures and actions. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018) elaborate that the TPR Method applies the principle that foreign language teaching should focus on nonverbal behavior. Learners acquire a language in two ways: observation and action, i. e., by observing others’ gestures and actions and by doing the actions. Learners respond to teacher commands with whole-body actions (e.g., “Stand up” or “Touch your nose”),

mimicking how children acquire their first language without speaking pressure. Teachers model commands first, then issue them to the group, gradually adding complexity (e.g., “Point to the door and jump”). Activities include imperatives, stories, songs, or role-plays; writing/reading follow later once oral comprehension solidifies.

The Total Physical Response Method of ELT fosters the idea that Language learning is more successful when learners enjoy the learning process. It is based on the idea that comprehension precedes production; listening and acting build understanding before students speak, reducing anxiety, and promoting right-brain learning. TPR is highly engaging and effective for vocabulary retention, motor skills, and mixed-ability classes; it lowers affective barriers like fear of mistakes. It is versatile for all ages, adaptable to large groups. As it requires space or movement, it may be challenging for some physical contexts or older learners. While TPR excels at building foundational comprehension through action, modern ELT often pairs it with communicative tasks for fuller skill development.

Suggestopedia (1970s)

Suggestopaedia is an ELT method developed by a Bulgarian psychotherapist, Georgi Lozanov, in the 1970s. This ELT method uses relaxation, music, and positive suggestions to accelerate learning by reducing psychological barriers (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Harmer, 2015; Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2018; Richards & Rodgers, 2019). Georgi Lozanov, the main proponent of this method, believes that we set up emotional obstacles to learn a language and therefore, fail to utilise our complete mental capacity. To be able to employ our maximum potential, the shortcomings we think we have should be 'desuggested.' It is, therefore, also called Desuggestopedia by some linguists. Learners should feel at ease so that their affective filter is lowered (Harmer, 2015). Suggestopedia creates a stress-free, comfortable environment to activate the learners. Positive suggestions from the authoritative teacher build confidence, while art, drama, and role-plays engage both rational and emotional learning channels (Lozanov, 1978). It emphasizes desuggesting limitations over rote memorization, claiming faster acquisition than traditional methods.

It is a method of teaching English in which students' feelings are valued (Celce-Murcia, 1991). It aims at assisting learners in overcoming their negative beliefs that they cannot learn the language and, hence, to enable them to acquire the language successfully (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2018, p. 71). It is highly motivating and effective for beginners; boosts retention, fluency, and enjoyment by lowering anxiety. It requires special setup which could be challenging for standard classrooms. Teachers need to be trained well. On the whole, the Suggestopedia ELT method is based on an affective-humanistic approach in communication. While Suggestopedia revolutionized humanistic ELT by prioritizing comfort and suggestion, contemporary practices often adapt its relaxation techniques within eclectic, communicative frameworks.

The Silent Way (1960s-1970s)

The Silent Way is an ELT method created by Caleb Gattegno in the 1970s, emphasizing learner autonomy through minimal teacher speech and self-discovery of language structures. The Silent Way method is founded on the belief that learning happens when, rather than just remembering and repeating what has been taught, the learner discovers and creates the language (Gattegno, 1972). The Silent Way was popularised by the linguist C. J. Dotson, who suggested that the use of the mother tongue facilitates the learning of the target language. He focused on using methods and structures from the First Language (L1) to learn the Second Language (L2).

Richards and Rodgers (2019) point out that Gattegno is famous for his use of colored wooden sticks called Cuisenaire rods and for his series ‘Words in Color,’ which is a technique to teach sounds by specific color codes.

In the Silent Way Method, teachers stay mostly silent, using gestures, silence, and aids like Cuisenaire rods (colored wooden blocks) and sound-color charts (Fidel charts) to prompt students to solve questions related to pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary independently. Learning builds from known to unknown via induction, with peer correction and group cooperation fostering responsibility and accuracy. Focus starts on sounds and functional language in meaningful contexts, avoiding translation or rote drills. Lessons involve structured exploration: teacher models briefly (e.g., arranging rods for ‘The blue rod is longer’), then students experiment, self-correct, and create sentences collaboratively. Pronunciation receives heavy emphasis early; reading/spelling follows sound-color links. Harmer (2015) argues that one important aspect of the Silent Way is the attitude of the instructor who, rather than interacting with the learners, speaks less or remains silent. The major features of The Silent Way as outlined by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018), include the following points: Sound is the basic feature of any language. Learners come with the experience of language learning i.e., learning their native tongue. Teachers must use the learners’ previous knowledge and use silence as a tool to foster students’ initiative and autonomy. They must talk or act only when necessary and promote cooperation among learners so that they can learn from one another.

The Silent Way promotes deep, independent learning and confidence through discovery, ideal for motivated adults. The method encourages precision in sounds and structures without heavy teacher dependence. It demands high teacher skill and specific materials; it can frustrate beginners needing more guidance. It is less suited to large or low-motivation classes. Nevertheless, it is innovative for learner-centered ELT, and teachers tend to blend it with more interactive methods.

Community Language Learning Method (1970s)

The Community Language Learning Method is an ELT method based on the Counselling-Learning approach developed by Charles A. Curran in the 1970s. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018), Curran believed that by being aware of and sensitive to the anxieties of the learners, teachers can facilitate learners in transforming their negative feelings into positive energy for learning a foreign language. A teacher serves as a language counsellor and counsels the students, listening to them and encouraging them to speak. The teacher helps learners to understand their own learning process.

Community Language Learning (CLL) is a humanistic language teaching method which treats learners as clients in a counseling session to foster a supportive community for low-anxiety language acquisition. The teacher acts as a counselor or facilitator, not an authority, helping students express thoughts in their native language before translating or reformulating them into the target language. Learners sit in a circle, decide content collaboratively, and progress through from dependence to independence, building trust and reducing the affective filter. Emphasis falls on whole-person learning—emotional security, peer support, and fluency over early accuracy—with grammar emerging inductively from authentic dialogues.

Typical activities include reflection (recording student speech), transcription/analysis, reflective listening to recordings, and creative extensions like role-plays or written summaries using new phrases. Native language use is encouraged initially as a bridge, with gradual shifts to target language dominance. While working in groups, learners begin to experience a sense of belonging to a group and learn from teachers and peers. This method focuses on cooperation, instead of competition. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018) assert, “Developing a community among the class members builds trust and can help to reduce the

threat of the new learning situation” (p. 93). It creates a safe, empathetic space ideal for adult learners anxious about speaking, promoting motivation and real communication. It relies heavily on trained facilitators and willing participants. While CLL supports a learner-centered community and emphasises learner autonomy, teachers today often integrate its supportive ethos into task-based or eclectic approaches.

5. Communicative Approaches

ELT methods which prioritize meaningful interaction and the development of communicative competence over rote memorization of linguistic forms are grouped under Communicative Approaches (Richards & Rodgers, 2019). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Cooperative Language Learning (CLL), and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) represent a learner-centred, interaction-driven orientation in contemporary ELT, where meaningful communication, authentic tasks, and collaborative processes collectively support the development of both accuracy and fluency. Proponents of communicative approaches argue that these methodologies—encompassing CLT, CLL, and TBLT—better prepare learners for real-world language use compared to traditional form-focused instruction, as they prioritize functional language practice embedded in socially relevant contexts.

Communicative Language Teaching Method (1970s–present)

The Communicative Language Teaching Method is an ELT method founded on the Functional theory of language, which emphasizes that language is a means of communication. According to Hymes (1972), language teaching must aim at ‘communicative competence.’ Richards and Rodgers (2019) highlight that linguists and language teachers noted that learners could frame sentences in a classroom, but failed to use the sentences correctly outside the classroom. Linguist Noam Chomsky argued that language is not the outcome of regular habits but rather of rules. Chomsky’s theory of Universal Grammar and the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) shifted ELT from behaviorist habit formation (like Audio-Lingual drills) to cognitive processes emphasizing innate mental structures for rule discovery. This views learners as actively constructing grammar internally, not through repetition. Communication is beyond the skill to pick up linguistic patterns. Learners were aware of the rules of a language, but were not able to practically use the language (Widdowson, 1978). Students, while communicating with others, are required to execute such functions as giving invitations, instructions, or directions (Wilkins, 1976). In short, “being able to communicate requires more than linguistic competence; it requires communicative competence” (Hymes, 1972, p. 278). This led to a transition in ELT in the late 1970s and early 1980s from a linguistic structure-centred approach to a Communicative Approach (Widdowson, 1990, as cited in Larsen- Freeman, 2018). Rather than focusing only on grammar, David Wilkins and other researchers in the 1970s studied the communicative functions of language (Wilkins, 1976). The spoken functions of language are of utmost importance. Accordingly, communicative language teachers focused on teaching learners how to extend invitations or to apologise, how to express agreement or disagreement (Harmer, 2015).

In Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the purpose of teaching a language is communicative competence (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2018). According to Richards and Rodgers (2019), the common activities in CLT include such activities as jigsaw, role play, task-completion, Information-gathering, opinion-sharing, information-transfer, and reasoning gap activities. Teachers facilitate the organization of these communicative activities and keep guiding the learners during the activities. Teachers are recommended to use activities with a focus on striving for a balance of fluency and accuracy. Grammar is taught in the context of real-life communication situations, with an emphasis on using

language for communication. It is integrated into communicative activities and used to facilitate meaningful communication. It is accepted for the learners to make mistakes. The idea of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) originates from CLT. ESP is based on the idea that language is learnt to achieve communication in specific fields. It focuses on interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of language learning, encouraging learners to engage in authentic communication through activities such as role-plays, information gaps, and discussions of real-life scenarios. As a result, CLT is a highly popular method of ELT in contemporary times.

Cooperative Language Learning (1980s–present)

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) is part of a popular learning approach known as Collaborative or Cooperative Learning (CL), which emerged in general education and highlights the significance of peer teaching. Most educators were dissatisfied with traditional classroom learning as they found it teacher-centred, fostering competition rather than cooperation (Richards & Rodgers, 2019). The early 20th-century US educator John Dewey propagated the notion of fostering cooperation in classrooms (Rodgers, 1988). Cooperative Learning ensures the use of cooperative activities with pair work and group work in the classroom. It has been defined by Olsen and Kagan (1992) as:

Cooperative learning is a group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others. (Olsen and Kagan, 1992, p. 8)

In Cooperative Language Learning, students learn from each other in groups. In Cooperative Learning, “teachers teach students collaborative or social skills so that they can work together more effectively” (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2018, p. 186). In Cooperative Language Learning, learners remain in one group for some considerable period and they learn how to collaborate with others. The teacher makes the groups so that the groups are diverse with different ethnic groups, different proficiency levels, etc. This provides room for the pupils to learn from other peers and provides them with training in how to interact with people who are different from themselves. So, besides language, teachers also teach cooperation. As Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018) rightly put it, “Cooperative Learning teaches language for both academic and social purposes” (p. 190). Group work and collaboration encourage learners to apply grammar in cooperative tasks. Tabassum (2023) concludes:

CL [Collaborative Learning] can be highly effective in achieving not just a learner-centered class focused on communicative competence but also equip students with several significant life skills such as autonomy, mutual understanding, patience, cooperation, team spirit, and caring for peers. (p. 231)

In Cooperative Learning, language learning is facilitated by learners communicating in the target language. Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) complements communicative approaches by organizing classroom activities into small, heterogeneous groups where students collaborate to achieve shared goals, fostering positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, and individual accountability. Within ELT contexts, CLL enhances communicative competence by providing structured opportunities for peer interaction, negotiation of meaning, and mutual support, which are particularly beneficial for developing speaking and listening skills in diverse learner groups.

Task-Based Language Teaching Method (1980s–present)

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), also sometimes referred to as Task-based Instruction (TBI), is a popular ELT method in contemporary classrooms. Van den Branden (2006) defines Task-Based Language Teaching as “an approach to language education in which students are given functional tasks that invite

them to focus primarily on meaning exchange and to use language for real-world, non-linguistic purposes” (p. 3). According to Richards and Rodgers (2019), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an ELT method where tasks or activities with objectives constitute the teaching learning process. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2018) explain that the purpose of TBLT is to give learners real-life situations to use language. Learners communicate with each other throughout the process of striving to finish a task. This kind of interaction helps learners use language to express and understand each other. During the interaction, they have to explain their ideas and get clarifications from others. They may get to listen to a language beyond their proficiency level, and they may assimilate their new learning into their knowledge of the target language to use in the future.

There are three phases involved in the TBLT process: pre-task, while-task, and post-task activities (Willis, 1996). All three phases involve the use of the target language; however, the post-task activity focuses on discussion about language. In the Pre-task stage, the teacher explains the assigned task, gives instructions, and discusses the relevant vocabulary. Sometimes, the students may hear audio clips of other learners performing the same task. The students execute the task in pairs or groups while the teacher supervises the class. The students then deliberate on how they will report the task to the class. The teacher may ask all or some students to deliver the report either orally or in writing. In the language focus stage, the learners analyse certain features of the material used for the task. The teacher may guide students to practice specific language features.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), often positioned as an evolution or refinement of CLT, structures instruction around authentic, goal-oriented tasks requiring participants to use the target language to achieve the goal, thereby promoting fluency, negotiation of meaning, and incidental focus on form (Willis, 1996). In TBLT, the task cycle—typically comprising pre-task preparation, task performance, and post-task language analysis—enables learners to experiment with language naturally while addressing gaps in their language through subsequent reflection and feedback.

In Task-based Language Teaching, grammar is a tool to achieve task objectives. Grammar instruction is integrated into tasks where learners are expected to use grammar to complete communicative tasks. Learners use grammar as a tool for problem-solving during tasks. The idea of Project-Based Learning in education evolved from this task-based approach in language learning. Learners work on projects or tasks that require them to use the concepts learned in class and apply their learning in real-world situations. In TBLT, completing relevant tasks using the target language is at the heart of the learning process, where learners are encouraged to reflect on the tasks and phrases used in the process. Such a focused interaction among the learners fosters language learning in a meaningful way.

6. Post-Method Approach

The Post-Method Approach is characterised by rejection of a single fixed method, emphasis on teacher autonomy, context-sensitive pedagogy, and flexible use of strategies (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001). The Post-Method Approach rejects one-size-fits-all teaching approach in favor of context-specific practices. It prioritizes teacher autonomy, allowing educators to develop their own theories from classroom experiences rather than following rigid prescriptions. Flexible strategies are emphasized through frameworks enabling adaptation to local needs.

Lexical Approach (1990s)

The Lexical Approach is an ELT method that places a strong emphasis on the teaching and learning of vocabulary as a central component of language acquisition. It was developed in the 1990s by Michael

Lewis (1993, 1997). It challenges traditional language teaching methods that often focus on grammar rules and sentence structures. It is founded on the belief that language comprises not just grammar but also word-combinations (Lewis, 1997). These are the phrases and other word combinations, i.e., collocations, idioms, etc., which form an important part of the language. Proficient language users often use most of these chunks at their disposal, such as “How are you?”, “See you later”, “You must be joking”, etc. Lewis (1997) proposes that fluency is the outcome of learning a large number of these chunks.

Language is made up of multi-word chunks and collocations rather than isolated words. Teaching and learning these chunks help learners use language more naturally and fluently. Therefore, rather than starting with grammar rules, it suggests that learners should focus on acquiring and using words and phrases in authentic contexts. Vocabulary should be taught and learned in context, enabling learners to understand how words are used in various situations. This approach advocates the use of authentic materials such as newspapers, articles, and audio tapes to enable learners to experience real language usage. It promotes fluency, instead of accuracy, allowing learners to make mistakes. Teaching word families helps learners understand how words are interconnected and expands their vocabulary more efficiently.

This overview reveals that the Lexical Approach as an ELT method is founded upon the principle that words and word-combinations are the building blocks of a language. It advocates that words are central to language, language use, and language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2019). It shifts the focus from grammatical structures to vocabulary and collocations. It aims to equip learners with set words, phrases, and collocations necessary for effective communication in real-world situations. The Lexical Approach does not propose a single method; rather, it informs a range of lexical-oriented teaching practices such as collocation-based instruction, chunk learning, corpus-based teaching, etc. The Lexical Approach, on the whole, is a theoretical orientation, not a fixed method. It emphasises flexible classroom practices (chunks, collocations, corpus), and can be combined with technology-based teaching.

The Eclectic Way (Late 20th century–present)

The Eclectic Way refers to the application of the appropriate elements from different methods, in accordance with the learners’ needs and situations. As only one method may not be ideal for all types of learners, in all situations, teachers must integrate appropriate methods. This dynamic approach advocates flexibility for both teachers and learners. Griffiths (2012) affirms, “Eclectic Method leaves the teacher free to choose from a variety of methods to help their students achieve success in language learning” (p. 473). The emphasis is on enabling the teachers to teach with flexibility and creativity, tapping into the potential of the most pertinent methods, depending on their learners, their needs and teaching situations. Drawing from various ELT methods, rather than adhering strictly to one particular method, the Eclectic Method recognises the diversity of learners, contexts, and learning objectives, allowing teachers to tailor their instruction to meet the specific needs of their students. It prioritizes the needs and interests of individual learners, catering to diverse learning preferences and abilities. Teachers can modify their teaching approach according to changes in students' language proficiency, learning styles, and classroom dynamics. Teachers integrate proven techniques and strategies from various teaching methods, leveraging the strengths of each method to enhance language learning outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their teaching practices, experiment with different techniques, and continually refine their approach to meet the evolving needs of their students. However, it requires careful planning, pedagogical expertise, and understanding of the language learning process. Because of its student-centred approach, flexibility and adaptability for diverse learning environments, it is a valuable approach in the field of English

Language Teaching. Many scholars now call this the ‘Post-Method Pedagogy’ (late 1990s–present), where teachers no longer follow one ‘method’ of teaching but choose techniques based on the local context.

Technology-Integrated Language Teaching Method (Late 20th century–present)

Technology/Integrated Language Teaching gained popularity during the late 20th century when computers entered the classrooms. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Computer-Assisted Language Teaching (CALT) using language labs and multimedia software were introduced in ELT classrooms. With the rapid spread of the Internet and the World Wide Web, computer-assisted instruction became widespread, and education software was developed. The 21st century witnessed the proliferation of technology-integrated language teaching using Web-based language learning, online interaction, video conferencing, and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). With the increased use of the Internet, digital media, social media, visual aids, websites, and applications, e-learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Learning Management Systems (LMS), smart classrooms, mobile learning, and Artificial Intelligence tools such as chatbots marked tremendous transformations in ELT.

Technology-Enhanced Language Learning enables teachers to access online dictionaries, e-books, and authentic resources and create a wide-variety of teaching and assessment material. It enables students to access the target language easily. As Kern (2006) points out, “Rapid evolution of communication technologies has changed language pedagogy and language use, enabling new forms of discourse, new forms of authorship, and new ways to create and participate in communities” (p. 183). Integration of technology in ELT facilitates students to work independently or in collaboration with other students, on computers or mobile phones, using different applications, inside and outside the classroom environment. It equips teachers with flexibility, where the teachers can tailor their teaching according to the teaching context and learners’ needs and proficiency levels. Some learning softwares offer customized feedback and remedial exercises according to the students’ performance on online tests. Grammar is taught through interactive software, gamification platforms, online exercises, and multimedia materials such as videos and audio recordings, which elevate students’ motivation and engagement. Tabassum (2024) states, “Use of computers, smart phones, learning games, smart boards, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and other technology-based activities add fun to learning and render the whole learning experience enjoyable and effective” (p. 38). In this way, in addition to the personalized learning experience, students can enjoy greater social interaction and worldwide connections through online platforms.

One technology-based way of practising language usage is through blogging. A blog is a personal online diary or journal. Students can create their blogs to document their language learning journey. Blogs can be a very rich source of language texts. Students who are hesitant to speak in front of others can use blogging as an important and entertaining tool to write and share their ideas and experiences. Blogging could be given as a regular assignment, activity portfolio, or a reflection journal.

A wiki is an online platform to create and edit documents through collaboration with other learners. The teacher can assign a wiki as an activity, ask students to create or edit the documents, and monitor their contributions towards the documents. Chatting platforms such as WhatsApp are also being used to teach and learn English. Video conferencing through Skype, Zoom, GMeet, MSTeams, Webex, and other online video meeting platforms has facilitated online sessions and collaboration in English language teaching and learning. In Social Networking Sites such as Facebook or Instagram, participants can have their own homepage dedicated to English language teaching and learning. YouTube is a website where one can watch and post language-related videos. It has proved to be a great platform for English language teaching and learning.

One of the major applications of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools in language teaching is distance education through online learning. The concept of Blended or hybrid learning emerged towards the late 20th century and grew popular during the early 21st century. It is a combination of face-to-face and online education. Tabassum (2024) comments, “Blended Learning is not a mere blend of online and offline teaching but a well-planned, student-centred pedagogical approach, involving face-to-face interaction between the teacher and the students and the optimum utilization of the available educational technology” (p. 126). The expansion of Learning Management Systems like Blackboard, Moodle, and Google Classroom facilitated blended teaching and learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a rapid increase in the use of educational technology. Tabassum (2022) observes, “The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a sudden proliferation of a multitude of user-friendly educational apps and websites and escalated a tsunami of educational technology” (p.62). With the widespread use of mobile phones, free applications have been created to learn English, where a significant number of applications are powered by Artificial Intelligence.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the most impactful innovations of the 21st century. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2024) defines AI as “the capability of a machine to imitate intelligent human behavior.” In 2019, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay said, “Education will be profoundly transformed by AI.” All India Council for Technical Education (2024) designated “2025 as the Year of Artificial Intelligence” (Times of India, 2024). Artificial Intelligence (AI) has, indeed, revolutionised education, especially language learning, with user-friendly tools for both teachers and students. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, AI is “the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings, where intelligent beings are those that can adapt to changing circumstances.” The integration of AI in ELT is a paradigm shift, substituting the conventional methods of teacher-centred traditional teaching models with student-centred, technology-driven, innovative teaching styles. Amongst the AI tools most commonly used in ELT are the different versions of ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Bing, Perplexity, Hemingway, Paperpal, Duolingo, Memrise, Kahoot, and Socrative. The use of AI in ELT provides many advantages like easy access to the relevant content, flexible and multiple ways of teaching and learning, personalized learning experiences, variety of audio-visual content, creation of teaching material, designing of AI-driven lesson-plans, assessments, customised rubrics, automated grading, real-time feedback, and reduced teacher workload, thereby, saving time, effort, and resources.

Integration of AI in ELT is marked by some challenges, such as its ethical use, privacy concerns, and economic inequality in access. AI-based ELT must be supplemented with human interaction for the development of linguistic skills. Researchers, policymakers, administrators, linguists and educators must collaborate to strengthen English language learning and teaching with responsible integration of AI while reinforcing the role of human interaction for the development of communication skills. Technology-based methods or AI-powered methods of ELT do not function as rigid methods. Instead, they support multiple pedagogical principles, adapt to local learner needs, and enable teacher-designed practices.

7. Conclusion

English is undoubtedly one of the most geographically widespread languages in the world. Approximately 1.5 billion people speak English globally (Statista, 2025). Emerging as an academic discipline in the 19th century, English Language Teaching (ELT) has evolved to become one of the fastest-growing professions of the 21st century. Beginning with the Classical Grammar-Translation Method, ELT has undergone a

long process of methodological development and is now increasingly shaped by technology and Artificial Intelligence. AI continues to revolutionise ELT by making English language learning more accessible, efficient, and learner-centred. Moreover, ELT is no longer confined to formal school settings; today, learners of all ages study English for diverse purposes, both offline in traditional classrooms and online through digital platforms, in formal as well as informal contexts. From a historical perspective, the evolution of ELT, thus, reflects the changing linguistic, technological, and social needs of a globalized world.

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