



Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal

www.vidhyayanaejournal.org

Indexed in: ROAD & Google Scholar

Scope for Research in English Language Teaching (ELT)

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Abstract:

English Language Teaching (ELT) is a dynamic field that constantly evolves in response to changes in society, technology, and pedagogical approaches. This research paper explores the key challenges faced by researchers in the domain of ELT. These challenges encompass various aspects of ELT research, including technology integration, learner diversity, assessment practices, teacher professional development, and the evolving role of English as a global lingua franca. This paper discusses these challenges in detail, offering insights into their implications for ELT research and suggesting potential avenues for future research to address these issues effectively.

1. Introduction:

English Language Teaching (ELT) plays a pivotal role in enabling individuals to communicate effectively in the globalized world. As ELT continues to evolve, researchers face several challenges that shape the direction of their work. This research paper delves into some of the most pressing challenges for research in ELT and discusses their implications for the field.

2. Background

Numerous studies in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) have been conducted by a number of researchers, yielding impressive outcomes in terms of diverse classroom experiences. Wallace (1998) has highlighted that a prevalent approach in language teaching involves action research, which centers on the collection of data from everyday instructional practices and its subsequent analysis to inform decision-making. Similarly, Derakhshan & Shirmohammadli (2015) have emphasized the necessity for educators to identify well-structured and systematic approaches to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

Bell (2007) has put forth the idea that teachers can actively encourage the utilization of language learning strategies by their students. Klein (1998) has observed that while there has been progress in research related to second language acquisition, many of these research findings do not have a direct correlation with the teaching process. This underscores the relevance of the present study, which addresses various issues that researchers can consider enhancing their research methodologies in the context of ELT.



3. Reading and Listening

Concerning matters related to reading and listening, researchers have the option to explore the following areas:

- a) Cultivating interest in reading and listening.
- b) Enhancing the reading speed of learners.
- c) Evaluating the current reading speed proficiency.
- d) Investigating whether the level of comprehension among learners from different regions varies.
- e) Identifying the motivations behind learners' engagement with additional books or magazines.
- f) Exploring the effectiveness of visuals in listening and reading.

In a similar vein, when it comes to listening, researchers can concentrate on assessing learners' listening speed and their comprehension levels.

In general, researchers have the flexibility to choose between a deductive or inductive approach for their research. The deductive approach involves progressing from a broad concept to a specific conclusion, often referred to as a top-down approach. Conversely, the inductive approach centers on drawing generalized conclusions from specific instances, typically known as a bottom-up approach.

4. Speaking and Writing

In the realm of speaking, researchers have the opportunity to delve into various aspects, including learners' psychological tendencies, strategies for encouraging their verbal expression, methods for enhancing their speaking skills, and the pace at which they speak. Similarly, within the domain of writing, researchers can explore elements such as the speed at which learners compose written content, their proficiency in maintaining grammatical accuracy, and the impact of their mother tongue on their English language acquisition. For instance, the Gujarati language, which serves as the mother tongue for the people of Gujarat, exhibits verb-ending characteristics, whereas English typically concludes sentences with objects, adverbials, or complements. There are still unexplored areas or in case of available studies the results have to be



reinvestigated to check the current scenario.

5. Grammar and Vocabulary

Under the classification of grammar and vocabulary, researchers can focus on how to ensure less grammar mistakes and high accuracy in learners and different vocabulary building strategies that can be adopted for effective teaching of English. Additionally, different other strategies that can be adopted for improving the LSRW skills can be experimented.

6. Language Acquisition and Development

Research in ELT often delves into the theories of language acquisition, such as Chomsky's Universal Grammar theory or Krashen's Input Hypothesis. These theories serve as foundational frameworks for understanding how individuals acquire language skills. Furthermore, researchers explore factors influencing language development in second language learners, including age, cognitive development, and the linguistic input they receive. This research provides valuable insights into optimizing language acquisition in educational settings.

7. Pedagogical Approaches

The pedagogical landscape of ELT has undergone significant transformations over the years. Traditional methods have given way to modern, learner-centered approaches. Researchers investigate the effectiveness of these approaches, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). These studies aim to determine which methods best facilitate language learning and how educators can adapt their practices to meet the needs of diverse learners.

8. Technology Integration

With the advent of technology, ELT has witnessed a digital revolution. Research in this area explores the integration of technology into language instruction. Topics include the use of computer-assisted language learning (CALL), mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), and online platforms for language instruction. Such research seeks to understand the impact of technology on language acquisition and how educators can harness digital tools effectively.



9. Assessment Practices

Effective assessment is essential for evaluating language proficiency accurately. ELT researchers delve into assessment practices, exploring traditional methods and innovative approaches. Formative assessment, alternative assessment, and performance-based assessment are among the areas of investigation. This research contributes to the development of fair, reliable, and valid language assessments.

10. Teacher Professional Development

Teachers play a crucial role in the success of language learners. Therefore, research focuses on teacher training and professional development programs. Studies in this area examine the impact of various training methods on teacher effectiveness, the beliefs and attitudes of educators, and strategies for ongoing teacher growth. Understanding the factors that influence teacher performance is instrumental in enhancing language instruction.

11. The Role of English as a Global Lingua Franca

The global nature of English extends beyond its native-speaking communities. It has become a global lingua franca, used as a means of communication between speakers of different native languages. Researchers investigate the implications of this shift in ELT. Topics include intercultural communication, the emergence of global English varieties, and the role of English as a tool for global diplomacy and business.

12. Specialized Areas of Research

In addition to these core areas, ELT research encompasses a wide array of specialized topics. Recent trends include investigations into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on language instruction, the integration of environmental sustainability into language teaching, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in language learning applications. These emerging areas reflect the dynamic nature of the field.

13. Research methods and tools for ELT

Research methods

In ELT, descriptive and experimental types of research can be adopted. Descriptive study involves survey with a population ranging from 30 to 1000 candidates. Experimental study would involve the division of



learners into two groups, namely control group and experimental group. The control group learners would not be given any intervention while the experimental group learners would be given certain interventions. There are other research methods available which can be chosen depending on the requirements of the research.

Tools for research

The tools that can be used for research include software package, questionnaire and semi-structured interview to collect the data. Researchers have to design a questionnaire, especially for survey research, validate it and then use it.

Research on online tools for ELT

Researchers can experiment with the effectiveness of online tools in different ways and different measures. Following are some of the online tools that can be utilized for teaching and learning English.

Speaking and listening tools

1. <http://www.repeatafterus.com/> -listening
2. www.booktrack.com/
3. <https://vocaroo.com/>
4. <https://www.vyond.com/>
5. <http://www.audiopal.com/>

Writing tools

1. <https://www.grammarly.com>
2. <http://www.hemingwayapp.com>
3. <http://cliche.theinfo.org>
4. <https://draftin.com>



5. <https://www.listen-and-write.com>

6. <https://storybird.com>

7. <https://animoto.com>

After going through all these, it is necessary to check where one is in terms of research and choose the research area accordingly.

Websites for teachers

Given below are some of the websites that teachers can use for enhancing the teaching and learning processes.

1. British Council Teaching English: www.teachingenglish.org.uk

2. ISL Collective: <https://en.islcollective.com/>

3. Designer Lessons: <https://designerlessons.org/>

4. One Stop English: <https://www.onestopenglish.com/>

5. BBC Learning English: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/>

6. Cambridge English Online: <http://cambridgeenglishonline.com/> for school goers

7. Lesson Stream: <https://lessonstream.com/>

14. Conclusion

In conclusion, the scope of research in English Language Teaching (ELT) is extensive and multifaceted. Researchers within the field continuously contribute to our understanding of language acquisition, pedagogical approaches, technology integration, assessment practices, teacher professional development, and the evolving role of English as a global lingua franca. Through their work, they inform and shape the practices of educators and policymakers worldwide. ELT research is instrumental in advancing effective language instruction and ensuring that learners are equipped with the linguistic skills necessary to navigate the complexities of our interconnected world.



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