



Interdisciplinary Approaches in English Language Teaching: Bridging Literature, Technology, and Professional Communication

¹Haribabu Thammineni, ^{2*}H. Seshagiri

¹Professor Lendi Institute of Engineering and Technology

²Associate Professor of English, NarsimhaReddy Engineering College, Hyderabad,

Abstract

With English developing into a global language, English Language Teaching (ELT) has had to change its focus from rule-based traditional approaches to an interdisciplinary, communicative approach. This paper discusses the confluence of English literature, educational technology and professional communication in order to facilitate linguistic empowerment and language acquisition. In the traditional ELT, the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was largely viewed as a focus on intellectual endeavour, aiming for the study of texts from classical literature, and, at times, lacking in communicative competence. New research trends now focus on a trans-disciplinary perspective in which the concept of 'text' has been enlarged to encompass malleable, multi-modal entities like digital media and advertisements, and hence on critical thinking, cultural awareness. Meanwhile, the application of new technologies such as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Virtual Reality (VR) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) have developed an immersive student-centred learning atmosphere which encourages learner autonomy. Moreover, the growth of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has made English relevant to the professional fields such as engineering and medicine, where English is used for international communication, research and development. In the "Post-Method" age with its problems of digital divide, language barriers, and cultural distance in the content of literature, teachers can employ "eclectic" methods that take into consideration the context. These blended learning approaches integrate the traditional approach to language instruction with contemporary interactive and technological tools to better equip students for the 21st century's workforce. This interdisciplinary approach provides a comprehensive teaching model which meets the multifaceted needs of the contemporary world.

Keywords: ELT, Interdisciplinary Approaches, English Literature, Educational Technology, Professional Communication, Post-Method Era.

Introduction

English has emerged from its status as a local dialect to become the main language of the modern world, a language of necessity for international understanding, economic growth and exchange of culture. In the present globalized context, the ability to conduct research, technological development and international transactions requires the use of the English language. As a result, the way we teach English (ELT) has undergone a radical metamorphosis from traditional teacher-centred practice to new models which are more dynamic and centred on the learner, focusing on communicative competence. This development is becoming more and more interdisciplinary, seeing language learning as not taking place in isolation but in relation to other areas of study and work. In the past, ELT was overwhelmingly focused on the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), a technique that stressed the need to be grammatically correct and the learning of "dead" classical languages for intellectual training. But, the



requirements of the 21st century necessitate a comprehensive model that connects theoretical language knowledge with application in the real contexts.

At the core of this new paradigm is the inclusion of literature, technology and professional communication. Literature is no longer just a medium of artistic enjoyment, but now, it is recognized as a tool that can play an important role in improving language skills, in broadening cultural awareness, and in building critical thinking skills. At the same time, the pace of educational technology has been accelerated, with the introduction of new technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and mobile-assisted learning, providing immersive and personalized learning experiences that have previously been impossible in the classroom. In addition, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has made it necessary to shift the focus of ELT to professional disciplines like medicine and engineering, where successful communication is essential to one's survival and success in the profession.

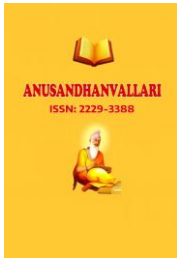
The shift to an interdisciplinary approach also indicates a general trend in research approach. In English literature, for example the term 'text' has been extended to include advertisements, films and digital media, and literary works are reworked in light of the input from psychology, sociology and anthropology. The inter-disciplinary nature leads to a synergy whereby the learner becomes more capable of dealing with complex language situations. This paper aims to discuss the pedagogical principles, advantages and difficulties of integrating Literature, Technology and ELT in the ELT classroom. It examines existing research and case studies and makes a case for using a context-sensitive, eclectic methodology that builds on the best of various disciplines, as most effective in 21st century learning in a hyper-connected and tech-driven world.

The Multidisciplinary Evolution of ELT and Literature

In the recent years, the traditional research of English literature has been greatly challenged. In the past, it was thought that a multidisciplinary approach was only suitable for science and technology, however, humanities and social sciences have now fully taken on this approach. English literature is no longer limited to themes or character studies, but has been expanded to other fields such as psychoanalysis, anthropology and post-colonialism in order to get a deeper understanding of the texts. This development is based on the recognition that, as members of society, writers are subject to its influences and respond to changes in politics, society, and technology.

One key development in this area is the redefinition of "text". Etymologically a text is something akin to a novel or a poem, but in contemporary theory it is anything that conveys meaning and information such as a signboard, a political cartoon, body language, as well as clothing. Modern scholars argue that texts are no longer static and stable, but fluid, multi-modal and interactive, as a result of the affordances of new media. This broader notion of definition necessitates a multi-disciplinary research methodology demonstrating and explaining the complex relationships between online and offline discourses. The theory of diaspora literature now appeals to history, economics, and political criticism, for instance, to explain the experiences of migrant communities.

This multi-disciplinary approach is used to engage students in a holistic learning process in the ELT classroom, linking the school to the outside world. Teachers no longer focus on memorization, and they recognize that learning is a process that lasts throughout life. This change is reflected in the implementation of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy (D.O.P), which sees language as a tool for thinking, feeling and group cohesion. D.O.P promotes students to read between the lines and beyond and also understand the meaning of a sentence from the listener's or student's perspective. It belongs to the constructivist approach in which the learner is an active object in building his own knowledge.



Literature for Linguistic and Cultural Proficiency (LLCP) integrates literature

The benefit of literature in English proficiency has been recognized worldwide. It offers a wide range of vocabulary, grammatical expressions and idioms to enhance students' language competence and boost their communicative ability. In addition to language, English literature is one of the main means of cultural awareness. The reading and analysis of literature allows students to gain insight into the history, values, and traditions of the English-speaking countries, helping them to understand how to fit into the social contexts of the world. The findings of the study show that the use of authentic literature, namely short stories and novels, stimulates students to be more imaginative and creative in writing. There are a few trails that have emerged which can help to improve literature instruction in ESL classrooms:

Culture Approach: This looks at literature as a reflection of society and focuses on developing the students' intercultural competence by analysing how the cultural beliefs are presented in the texts.

- ❖ **The Multi-Modal Approach:** Incorporates technology, visuals and DVD films for learning; and is found to be more effective than traditional textbooks.
- ❖ **Scaffold Reading Approach:** This offers support, using pre-reading activities and vocabulary development, to assist students in understanding difficult literary pieces.
- ❖ **Focus on the student's opinion and perception of the text and encourage them to make links between literary themes and their experiences in life (the Reader-Response Approach).**
- ❖ **Literature Circles:** Provides opportunities for students to learn collaboratively as they discuss novels and stories in small groups; has been found to enhance reading comprehension and motivation.

But the use of literature-based ELT is very difficult, especially in areas where English is a second language. The syntactic complexity and unfamiliar words at a specific point can make it difficult for the student to analyze a text. In addition, literature may include references to the cultural background of the authors which are unfamiliar to students and therefore need to be translated into other symbols and meanings. In some cases, particularly in Malaysia, teachers might concentrate too much on literature for exam purposes and this may hinder the real enjoyment of the subject as well as its communicative value.

The Digital Divide: Bridging the Gap through Technology

Digital technology has transformed ELT from teacher-led teaching to student-centered teaching, and the rapid development of digital tools has changed the teaching landscape. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has come to encompass a myriad of software, multimedia materials and online resources designed to meet the unique needs of each learner. Unlike traditional approaches, these tools offer immediate feedback, individualized learning sequences, and exposure to a variety of linguistic contexts.

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are one of the most groundbreaking innovations in modern ELT. These technologies allow computer-simulated environments that present the learner with real-life experiences, enabling him/her to experience a virtual reality world where he/she can practice the language in real-life contexts. VR and AR can be especially useful for practicing industry specific words and scenarios without fear of making mistakes, e.g. ordering a meal while in a restaurant or engaging in a business negotiation.

Thanks to the omnipresence of smartphones, students can also use them to learn English "anytime, anywhere", which is called Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Duolingo, Babbel and Memrise are popular apps that give flexibility and accessibility, enabling students to work at their own speed. MALL also breaks the barriers between formal and informal learning, allowing students to involve in language use activities after class by interacting with each other through social media, messaging applications, language learning games and others.



In addition, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) will further tailor learning with chat bots and personalised adaptive learning programmes that may modify their difficulty based on the performance of the learner. In Singapore, the adoption of “e-pedagogies” encompasses the use of tools such as Padlet, a collaborative platform, and Grammarly, an AI writing assistant, to support self-directed and collaborative learning. Despite all these advantages, systemic issues such as the digital divide (e.g., not every student is able to access technology in low-income areas), and the lack of digital literacy of both students and teachers, pose barriers to technology integration.

Professional Communication and English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

The need for highly skilled people is growing due to globalization and ELT should be in tune with the needs of different industries. It is now essential to engineering students, doctors and business people to master English for professional communication. In Hyderabad, India, a leading IT and engineering city, conventional education approaches have not resulted in students becoming confident and competent in using professional English. To overcome this, Project Based Learning (PBL) is being introduced in engineering colleges, where students are engaged in real-life projects that involve them in English language use for research, collaboration and technical report writing.

English is essential to medical profession, as it is the language of medical scientific discovery and medical journals worldwide. Academic English is a field that helps doctors to stay up to date with cutting-edge treatments, as well as communicate with others from foreign countries. The study conducted at Osh State University showed that 94% of the medical staff wished to learn English, while the medical staff faced a lack of foreign literature dealing culture, because they did not have enough language knowledge. Overcoming this divide requires interdisciplinary training, a combination of medical expertise and language skills, in order to survive in the modern world.

Role-play and simulations are also important for professional development, giving students the opportunity to rehearse job interviews, client interactions and professional meetings. These activities focus on the fluency rather than accuracy of the student's response, helping the student to effectively communicate meaning in situations that are stressful and often occur in business settings. Cultivate a different perspective of language learning by weaving language into professional content for students to see language as a tool for success.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a specific type of Integrated Pedagogies.

Language-content synergies are evident in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Content-Based Instruction (CBI). The CLIL approach is based on the teaching of non-linguistic subjects like mathematics, history, science etc. in a foreign language, which means that CLIL is a two-in-one approach: the study of content and the learning of a new language. This approach is frequently explained using the ‘4 Cs’ model: Content, Communication, Cognition and Culture.

The students are given meaningful and relevant contexts for language learning as they are presented with technical texts and academic discourse which they would come across in professional contexts. It encourages students to think at higher levels and engage in problem-solving activities using complex information in the target language. Moreover, CLIL creates a language and content co-learning context in which learners are required to work together to achieve their goals, thus developing their interpersonal and team working abilities.

Higher education contexts have witnessed the emergence of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in recent years, especially in STEM fields in Europe and Asia, growing in abundance. But studies have identified a complex relationship between a teacher's level of English and teaching method. The higher the teacher's proficiency level, the more versatility the teacher will exhibit in teaching styles, as well as being statistically less likely to be



primarily teacher-driven and monologic, and more likely to involve students in active, deep-level learning. This highlights the importance of ongoing professional development to enable EMI teachers to develop their language and pedagogical competencies.

The post-method period and learner-centred techniques.

Today learner autonomy and empowerment are a key feature of modern ELT. Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is one of the approaches that focus on the actual tasks instead of the grammar. This change is from "what" of language (rules) to "how" (communication). In TBLT, the focus is not on accuracy until after students have had an opportunity to practice communicating meaning to others in pairs or groups.

Any one method has its own restraints, which has ushered the "Post-Method" era. This paradigm is based on the notion of not having a single best method, but rather an eclectic approach that is context specific. The eclectic teacher's goal is to maximize the effects of any technique used, whether it requires using traditional grammar or new interactive techniques, depending on the needs of their students. Some examples of a successful hybrid approach include integrating grammar-translation methods and digital storytelling as a way for students to develop linguistic rigor while expressing themselves in a creative manner.

Here this can be seen in the English Language Syllabus of the national school system, where multiliteracies, metacognition, and inquiry are emphasised by dialogue. Multiliteracies support different forms of communication in the digital and global world whilst metacognition enables pupils to be able to plan, monitor and regulate their own learning processes. In addition, there is an increasing awareness of translanguaging, in which the learner's first language is seen as a tool to support the comprehension of English language complex concepts.

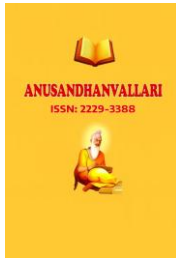
Conclusion

ELT has evolved from the old rule-based approaches to the new interdisciplinary, communicative approaches, as it is necessary to respond to the complexity of the 21st century. The integration of literature, technology, and professional communication will help to develop a comprehensive learning model that is capable of preparing students for the global workplace, which has multi-faceted demands. The cultural and critical foundation comes from literature, the immersive and accessible tools come from technology, and the practical and purposeful language learning comes from professional contexts.

Although CT, CLIL, TBLT, and other modern approaches have clearly been beneficial in terms of students' engagement and fluency, they need to overcome the systemic issues like the digital divide, lack of teacher training and cultural resistance. Finally, the future of ELT is of the Post-Method era where teachers can choose and tailor the methods appropriate to their own educational environments, in which they are allowed to become "artists". With a balanced, eclectic, and context sensitive approach, the field of ELT can remain vital to giving learners the linguistic empowerment and intercultural competence needed to survive in a more interdependent and dynamic world.

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