

RESEARCH TITLE

Modern English Language Teaching Strategies and their Importance in the 21st Century (An Applied Linguistic Study)

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Abstract

The current study investigates the importance of modern English language teaching and learning strategies in the 21st century. In this study, the researcher presents a descriptive-analytic account of the most prominent traditional language teaching approaches: grammar-translation method, audio-lingual method, and the direct method. Then, the researcher gives a detailed account of the most important language teaching approaches adopted in the 21st century: the communicative approach and the immersion approach. Also, this work clarifies the role of language culture in modern language teaching strategies through discussing both the elements and conventions of language culture and making a comparison between the native language and the foreign language in this regard. Furthermore, the current study investigates the key strategies in teaching and learning English as a foreign language, making a comparison between the traditional approaches in teaching and learning foreign and second languages and the most recent and modern language teaching and learning strategies followed worldwide. At last, this study comes up with important conclusions, the most important of which is that the immersion approach used first in Canada is the most recent, modern, and effective in teaching and learning foreign language. All in all, the coming generation is in need of a more flexible strategy that guarantees a successful teaching and learning with respect to the target language. This strategy, of course, would not be effective apart from an extrovert instructor.

Key Words: Modern English language teaching, 21st-century learning strategies, communicative approach, immersion approach, language culture.

استراتيجيات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية الحديثة وأهميتها في القرن الحادي والعشرين (دراسة لغوية تطبيقية)

المستخلص

تبحث الدراسة الحالية في أهمية استراتيجيات تعليم وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية الحديثة في القرن الحادي والعشرين. ويقدم الباحث في هذه الدراسة عرضاً وصفيّاً تحليلياً لأبرز طرائق تعليم اللغة التقليدية، وهي: طريقة القواعد والترجمة، والطريقة السمعية الشفوية، والطريقة المباشرة. ثم يقدم عرضاً مفصلاً لأهم مداخل تعليم اللغة المعتمدة في القرن الحادي والعشرين، وهما: المدخل التواصلية ومدخل الانغماس اللغوي. كما توضح هذه الدراسة دور الثقافة اللغوية في استراتيجيات تعليم اللغة الحديثة، من خلال مناقشة عناصر الثقافة اللغوية وأعرافها، وإجراء مقارنة بين اللغة الأم واللغة الأجنبية في هذا السياق. علاوة على ذلك، تبحث الدراسة في الاستراتيجيات الرئيسية لتعليم وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية، من خلال المقارنة بين المداخل التقليدية في تعليم وتعلم اللغات الأجنبية والثانية، وبين أحدث الاستراتيجيات الحديثة المتبعة عالمياً في تعليم وتعلم اللغة. وتخلص الدراسة في النهاية إلى مجموعة من النتائج المهمة، من أبرزها أن مدخل الانغماس اللغوي، الذي استخدم أولاً في كندا، يُعد من أحدث المداخل وأكثرها فاعلية في تعليم وتعلم اللغة الأجنبية. وبوجه عام، فإن الجيل القادم يحتاج إلى استراتيجيات أكثر مرونة تضمن نجاح عملية التعليم والتعلم فيما يتعلق باللغة المستهدفة. ولا شك أن هذه الاستراتيجيات لن تكون فعالة بمعزل عن معلم منفتح وفاعل في العملية التعليمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية الحديثة، استراتيجيات التعلم في القرن الحادي والعشرين، المدخل التواصلية، مدخل الانغماس اللغوي، الثقافة اللغوية.

1. Introduction

It has pointed out that a variety of teaching strategies have been followed by educational policies that are concerned with English teaching. However, some of these teaching strategies have failed; others have achieved admirable success. The failure of these teaching strategies is mainly attributed to the cultural and contextual factors. Accordingly, educators have adopted many teaching strategies and mechanisms to discover which one is more operative and workable. Though every approach has its own merits and demerits, educational authorities experienced all approaches to teaching and learning English, along with a variety of mechanisms and techniques required to convert learning theories into practical reality and empirical steps. Interestingly, enough, teaching and learning a given language, Black (2004: 5) sustains, cannot properly be accomplished apart from its culture. Worded differently, familiarity with the language's culture and social conventions is considered as a must for the learner in order to acquire the target language since the cultural context would facilitate the process of language learnability and teachability. As a consequence, this research incorporates a section dedicated to cultural dimensions that contributes to learning and teaching English.

Moving to the contents of this research, this work involves the key methods of teaching English right from Grammar Translation Method onwards so as for the reader to realise the strengths and weaknesses of every approach. What is more, the syllable maker can make use of such a research paper to identify which techniques ensure the main aim of teaching English, which sparks communication by the learner linguistically and socially, as Gebhard (2006: 130-6) addresses.

At last, this research is attached by a host of the main conclusions this work has achieved with an emphasis on the main fruitful ones that bring about potent grounds upon which teachability and learnability of English are based to pave the way for brighter techniques that saves both time and effort for educators and policy makers to follow a flawless pedagogical strategy of teaching English.

Teaching is a sacred issue since it is first performed by prophets and religious readers. Many people wish to do this action because it is an interesting task. Nevertheless, English teaching mission is a challenging issue everywhere in the world, in particular in countries this language is a foreign language. It should be acknowledged that learning English is a crucial performance since this language is the language of science and tourism and it is hard to behave apart of it. The vast majority of scientific resources are written in English and researchers and scholars badly need it to write academic research papers. By the same token, English is too much needed in communication with other people whose native language is not English; one can interact with a foreigner in any place of the world by using English and one can communicate one's ideas clearly by employing English (Yule, 2006: 110-15). By contrast, communication is blocked without English, especially between foreigners.

Accordingly, there is a pressing need to indulge into the way English is taught or learnt. At first, there were many arbitrary methods of teaching English (Rajimwale, 2001: 90-100), and the results, unfortunately, were disappointing. In response to such deteriorated outcomes due to subjective strategies followed, there are many sophisticated studies in this respect, and the researchers who investigate this problematic issue come up with many recommendations, the most important of which is that teachers should unify their effort and follow a single method of teaching English in their different countries, a strategy that would be proposed by the highest academic authority in the state. After intensive discussion in this regard, teachers of English are entitled and recommended to follow a particular pedagogical strategy that ensures some success and progress. As such, some approaches to teaching and learning English are

recalled to address this grave difficulty and resolve the differences in opinion in this trend. Unluckily, some instructors do not stick to the teaching strategies put forwarded by educational authorizes, and, hence, a great deal of failure would result. Consequently, teachers are recommended to follow the instructions and proposals established by the educational polices in conjunction with those articulated by the supervisors and senior teaching staff.

In recent years, education has witnessed fundamental transformations in teaching strategies, caused by rapid technological advancements and successive social, economic, and cultural changes. This has led to the need to develop teaching strategies to meet present learner characteristics and contemporary challenges. In this regard, research has revealed that employing modern teaching strategies highly contributes to reinforcing understanding, progressing skills, and developing critical thinking among learners (Al-Khazaleh, 2022: 124).

Modern teaching strategies, including active learning, cooperative learning, project-based learning, problem-based learning, and the flipped learning, vary a lot in their effectiveness because they focus on many factors such as the student and the educational process as well. They also encourage interaction, discovery, and integration into the learning environment (Al-Qatawneh, 2021: 23). Al-Harbi study revealed that the employment of modern teaching strategies in teaching natural sciences helped a lot in improving academic achievement by (27%) in schools in Saudi Arabia (Al-Harbi, 2020: 12).

Equally important, developing the competence abilities of the learner cannot be separated from the teaching tools and methods used because the quality of the educational process focuses largely on the teacher's ability to choose the suitable and appropriated teaching strategy for a particular educational situation. In this respect, various researches have showed that the gap between expected and actual academic performance among learners is due to teachers' reliance on traditional strategies that lack interaction and motivation (Williamson, 2020: 202).

Currently, education has shifted its methods and strategies from memorization-based learning to thinking-based abilities (May, 2009: 39-40). Scholars emphasize that students should learn how to manage their own learning not just receive information (Pintrich, 2002: 9-10). To achieve this goal, learners should use modern strategies. Following Flavell (1979: 20), modern language strategies develop the ability to think including planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning process.

In Iraq, the Ministry of Education always plans and seeks to employ modern teaching strategies that contribute to developing the educational level, especially in light of the big challenges in teaching and learning processes in the world (Abdullah, 2023: 120-121).

1.1 Problem of the Study

Language teaching is not an easy stint and needs more consideration to arrive at successful outcomes in this regard. Many teachers and scholars are prone to traditional strategies in teaching language, believing that those approaches are more useful and fruitful for the learners, one the one hand and they think that any change in this trend would confuse the students and devastate their competence and performance, on the other hand. However, this belief, it turns out, is misleading and devastative. In reaction to such deterioration in teaching, there should be a survey of the modern strategies that guarantee a successful teaching and learning and adoption of the most recent strategies of language acquisition and learning (Schmitt, 2002: 8-11).

To address this thorny problem, teachers of English in Iraq and elsewhere should be

guided to follow a more comprehensive and effective approach identified by the educational authority whose specialty is teaching and learning English. By the same token, supervisors are responsible for the application of the curriculum identified in this paradigm and should not tolerate the instructor's divergence from the approach nominated. It so happens that many instructors are not quite satisfied with the new developments in the pedagogy and language teaching and this is why there are some inadequacies in this respect. Nonetheless, junior teachers, unlike senior ones, stick to the evaluation and development of teaching language, believing that this is the most appropriate and successful technique that learners are to follow. Of course the effective approach in this regard should integrate the linguistic forms and cultural assumption in tandem with the time and place where these forms are used so that the use of linguistic expressions are more suitable to the context of use. Worded differently, linguistic forms and utterances that are decontextualized are not functionalized and intelligible enough to be used communicatively. Accordingly, there is a need to consider the context in which utterance are structured so as to interpret them well and to formulate these utterances properly and appropriately (ibid.).

The Iraqi intermediate school students' performance does not reflect a noticeable advancement in modern teaching strategies employed in Iraq in the current years. In fact, this raises many questions about the effectiveness of these modern teaching strategies, how they are applied, and the extent to which Iraqi intermediate school students interact and respond to them. Educational reports in Iraq have indicated that intermediate school students' performance is very weak in major school subjects like the English language, mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, and even geography, despite the availability and employment of modern teaching strategies.

Modern teaching strategies heavily concentrate on learner-centered and active learning. Modern teaching strategies replace traditional teaching with technology integration, collaboration, and critical thinking. In this regard, modern teaching strategies include the following major aspects: project-based learning and personalized instruction designed to prepare learners for real-world problem solving.

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims at achieving the following points:

1. identifying the most suitable strategy of teaching and learning English.
2. describing the traditional approaches to language teaching in comparison with the most recent ones.
3. showing the role of culture and cultural assumptions in teaching language.

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

This work hypothesizes the following points:

1. The most suitable strategy in language teaching is expected to be the communicative approach.
2. The traditional approaches are sterile and out of favour because they are invalid and fruitless.
3. The culture and cultural norms are of significant role in teaching language.

1.4 The Limits of the Study

The current study is limited to the following points:

1. The Iraqi EFL learners' performance.

2. Modern teaching strategies in comparison with traditional teaching methods.

The Value of the Study

This study is useful for the syllable makers and EFL teachers to make use of the findings of this work. It also serves as an empirical testimony to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the current strategies of teaching English in Iraq.

1.5 Procedures

The following procedures are done in this regard:

1. Setting up an account of the traditional approaches and the most recent ones.
2. Setting up an account of culture and its importance in teaching language.
3. Some new strategies like immersion is thoroughly discussed within this research paper.

2. Approaches to Teaching and Learning English

In fact, teachers of English are reluctant to adopt linguistic approaches and techniques and, hence, many advisory methods are adopted with useless outcomes in this regard. As such, linguists, educators, and educational authorities save no effort to get teaching and learning stick to the theories and approaches proposed by linguistics in this paradigm. Subsequently, arbitrary methods are totally uprooted in favour of enlightened teaching techniques that ascribe to the pedagogical theories (Rajimwale, 2001: 250-1).

In this respect, among teaching strategies emerge to address this pedagogical problem; some of them are traditional, others are modern. The time is ripe to touch upon the main traditional approaches in comparison with the most recent ones so that one can judge the validity of modern strategies of teaching and their effectiveness.

2.1 Traditional Approaches to English Teaching

The following strategies are the key ones that were advocated in teaching English and other foreign languages. Historically speaking, applied linguistics is limited to language teaching. Later on, it turns out that this assumption is misleading and, hence, many disciplines like pragmatics and translation are proved to be under the purview of applied linguistics. However, three main approaches should be taken into consideration when discussing traditional teaching. They are as follows (Cook, 2003: 31-2).

2.1.1 Grammar Translation-Based Approach

Depending on Latin and Greek, this method, which is the most dominant one in the 17th century, recommends that the grammar of Latin is the most privileged law that should be strictly applied to English, arguing that any English sentence that does not conform to Latin rules is condemn and stigmatized as sloppy, illogical and incorrect (Liles, 1971: 3-4).

Scholars and linguists adhering to this approach usually resist and refuse any change in language and, therefore, their concern is correctness of English sentences and phrases. Accordingly, teachers following this school consider mistakes as corruption and decay in a given language and, therefore, the learners should commit no mistakes at all. In fact, this assumption is untenable because language is subject to inevitable change on the passage of time (Aitchison, 1999: 6-7). The traditional grammarians adherence to what is correct vis. What is wrong can be exemplified by the linguistic expression differ from which they consider as correct as opposed to differ to which they regard as incorrect.

All in all, teachers following the postulates of this theory are usually engaged in writing some sentences from the source language along with their translation into the target language

(ibid.). Here, the instructor spends the whole lesson period translating the sentences, phrases, and words into the mother language. Being so, the learners focus their attention on the native language more than the target language and, thus, the learner's knowledge ability of the target language is feeble and very little, if any, development would occur. Following Yule (2006: 121-5), the disparity between Latin rules and its English counterparts cause so much confusion on the part of the learners and teachers as well. So, it is strange to teach or study a particular language in terms of the rules and precepts of another language since each language has its own system. By way of illustration, one can consider the traditional rule that says no separation of an infinitive as in "I want you to follow me blindly" which traditional linguists consider its conversion as wrong into "I want you to blindly follow me", since there is splitting in the infinitive by the adverb blindly. Nevertheless, this judgement is indefensible because the latter sentence is grammatically correct and highly used by almost all English speakers (Aitchison, 1999: 7-9). Additionally, there are other rules which are basically of Latin origin that are not operative in English at all. One can say there is no correspondence between theory and use of English sentences that those grammarians assign description to their structure simply because the sentences constituted by those grammarians' recommendations are mostly meaningless and out of favour. Described as a bag into which rules are stored, traditional grammar is seen as a defective approach that curriculum designers should give up to look for an alternative strategy in this trend (Cook, 2003: 32).

Equally important, another negative aspect in this language teaching approach is that the whole text is converted into the target language in terms of word-for word strategy and this literal translation can encounter so many daunting challenges. Not all the source language words have their equivalents in the target language, a process that proliferates the learner's perplexity and bewilderment (ibid.).

2.1.2 Audiolingualism Method

Based on American Structural Approach which is so influential in the United States of America and elsewhere, audiolingualism is mainly based on the psychological theory of behaviourism. Behaviourism, which is basically proposed by Skinner, states that there is a stimulus for every response, believing in the assumption that undesired behaviour can be rooted out whenever there is ruthless punishment in all aspects and walks of life, including education. Consequently, this hypothesis holds that severe punishment is required when a learner commits a mistake so that the learner would avoid erroneous conducts with respect to the learning process in the future (Liles, 1971: 11-15).

Accordingly, class environments witnessed appalling situations and horrible measures during the teaching process. That is to say, learners, regardless to their ages and health conditions, are constantly exposing to the teacher's violence and bodily punishment, an act which made the pupils leave schools coercively. As a matter of fact, scholars and educators believe that this habit-formation approach to teaching a foreign language is used to purify the learner's linguistic output from possible mistakes since the pupil's correct answers as the right conduct can only be obtained by severe punishment as a tangible reinforcement (ibid.). Along with ruthless penalty, repetition of words and sentences chorally and individually is largely emphasized because the advocates of this school think that repetition would strengthen one's linguistic ability since it remains constant in the learner's mind. In the same vein, the proponents of structuralism underscore the significance of rehearsal of linguistic utterances because such a pattern of behaviour, believe the structuralists, is the motor of language production. As a result, children learn their native language by means of repetition of the adult's language (Schmitt, 2002: 5-8).

It should be admitted that this approach was so influential in teaching English worldwide

that its application lasted for nearly 25 years or so. In Iraq, audiolingualism, which is structural in essence, was enormously experienced and so many veteran professors and teachers practice teaching this method when it comes to learn and teach English. Learners are tasked to do a lot of drills assigned to them by their instructors. Unfortunately, this approach cannot enable the learner to speak and interact appropriately (ibid: 9-11). Al-Hamash, the leading professor whose specialty is teaching and learning English in Iraqi educational institutions, once said that he and a group of teachers travelled to London to complete their higher studies, but they were unable to communicate with a gardener there though they, Al-Hamash claims, learned a great number of rules and vocabularies, an indication of this approach's failure (ibid.). On the other hand, the theses adopted by this approach with respect to children's learning via repetition turns out to be indefensible. This fallacy is demonstrated by the fact that a sentence such as "Ahmed does not come to school because he is ill", when heard by a child, cannot be exactly repeated by the same child when he is asked to say what is said earlier. A sentence like "Ali is sick and, therefore, he does not come to school" is a possible answer by the child in question, a response that has nothing to do with repetition, but it is a kind of innovation and creativity (Yule, 2006: 43). In support of this claim, a speaker can produce so many utterances that he has never heard before when he is asked to deliver speech on an occasion. As such, repetition is firmly rejected and strongly challenged. At last, this approach is no longer plausible and valid in teaching English, and theorists are invited to find an alternative one.

2.1.3 The Direct Approach

Within the onset of the 20th century when the grammar-translation method was in its heydays in Europe and elsewhere in the world, there are changes in teaching and learning methods. This alternation is attributable to the massive immigration to United States of America and to the growing world trade and tourism, and hence, there is a pressing need to learn English to cope with such requirements and developments (Cook, 2003: 32-3). Here, the new way should be suitable for the new population of immigrants whose their first language are different from one another. Instructions and explanations cannot be achieved in the native language to clarify the contents of the class teaching with its language is a foreign language. Consequently, spoken and written language is needed by the learners under the purview of the direct approach which inhibits the learner's language along with translation and enforcement of a new technique.

In this method, the key concern has nothing to do with hard work and drills, but it concentrates upon the degree of approximation to the native language that the learner can obtain. Grammar is mastered inductively with the emphasis is placed on language skills, especially speaking and listening. Speech is highly emphasized in their approach along with correct pronunciation. Concrete vocabularies are learned in terms of demonstration (ibid.). However, this approach is not adequate enough to get the learner speak and communicate properly.

3. Modern Strategies and Approaches

It has been pointed out that a a good approach to learning and teaching a language is the one that enables the learner to effectively interact and sufficiently communicate with other speech communities of English with ease and flexibility (Schmitt, 2003: 11).

3.1 Communicative Approach

Alternatively known as communicative language teaching, communicative approach is considered as the most progressive method of teaching in which the focus of teaching is on the function of the message the sender transmits to the receiver. Put differently, the main

concern of this approach has nothing to do with the form of the message, but it emphasizes the content of what is said (Cook, 2003: 36-7). In consequence, interlocutor should pay great attention to the meaning of the message; that is a shift of heed occurs from the language system in general to language use which is conducted in a certain context. Word differently, this approach overlooks the formal properties and systematic rules of the language under scrutiny, having nothing to do with pronunciation. Instead, it has to do with the way one uses language to perform actions and achieve successful communication (ibid.).

Unlike traditional approaches of grammar-translation method and the direct approach which first study the form of a language expression and only later on the purpose of using this form, communicative approach first studies the function and use of linguistic expressions and then the structural properties of these expressions (ibid.).

In fact, communicative approach is quite useful on the macro and micro levels of language. On the macro-level of language, English is used for specific purposes (ESP) in which one's language should be developed to get some jobs in public or private sectors through one's development of discourse analysis and pragmatics. On the micro-level of language, English is to be developed within the classroom environment so that the learner can use language in instructions and other speech acts that the participants can adapt their language to satisfy their needs and issue their speech acts suitable to the situations they encounter (ibid.).

In the classroom, this approach, this approach recommends division of learners into small groups with the teacher acting as the supervisor, manager or facilitator, introducing no interpretation of the lesson under discussion. At the same time, every group has a leader, who is the most brilliant pupil who runs the group properly. The learner's roles with the group are not fixed but changeable in order to get more effective interaction and communication. This practice is wonderfully assessed because it grants the student a huge opportunity to take part in the language activities identified. This approach, in fact, assigns priority to speaking over writing and in consequent one can find fluent speakers though speaking is the most challenging skills in language teaching (Schmitt, 2003: 17-18). Nonetheless, this approach counts as a less disciplined method because there is a great deal of choice but this noisy is a healthy noise since it is an indispensable part of learning in this way. By the same token, this approach witnesses a shift in orientation from teachability to learnability. That is to say, the teacher is not held responsible for teaching, but he is accountable for organisation of students and management of the lecture. The learner feels relaxed and, therefore, can communicate effectively away from the teacher's pressurized strategies as the case with the traditional approaches (ibid.).

Looked at from another angle, this approach is innovative since the learner can structure new form and expression with new ideas, a thing that all the rest approaches completely lack. Nowadays, communicative approach is highly praised everywhere and its findings are admirably interesting. Unfortunately, some teachers of English, influenced by the previous approaches which are passive approaches in nature, are not applying the postulates and principles of this strategy well within the classroom environment. One reason for this failure is that the teachers at issue are not qualified enough to apply this approach. Another reason is that the sizeable classrooms in the some areas that complicate the applications of this approach are not suitable for applying this approach. Additionally, some colleges and educational institutions do not emphasize the importance of this approach, unfortunately (ibid.).

In conclusion, communicative approach is after fluency as opposed to accuracy. Taught mostly through problem-solving drills and exercises that demand learners to fill information such as blanks that need information. That is to say, exchange if information is the key task followed in this approach. Here, the context is of help to activated the learners (ibid: 19).

3.2 Immersion

Considered as the most effective variant of communicative approach, this method recommends that learners should learn English indirectly by means of engaging them with their lessons in the primary and secondary schools, and subject-matters written and taught in English. Beginning in Canada, this effective method is highly admirable since all the learners are fluent speakers of English and this is conducted through exposure to the second or foreign language with no overt instruction. By the same token, those learners acquire very good receptive skills though they constantly commit grammatical mistakes in their performance. These mistakes are unfortunately persistent though those learners' errors are always corrected. This indicates that communicative approach produces fluent learners with no accurate performance, an indication that certain quantity of mistakes are badly needed in order to ensure fluently on the behalf of the learner (Dought and William, 1998: 10-12). Communicative approach, including immersion, depends on the following criteria when there is language assessment:

1. Validity: The test is concerned with evaluating what is supposed to evaluate.
2. Reliability: The test is conducted by a single administration.
3. Practicality: The test is practical to give and be identified within a given setting.

All in all. This approach is very successful and it should be followed by educational authorities to be effective provided that there are qualified and competent teachers of English (ibid.).

4. Culture

Theorists and educators in language teaching and learning English unanimously agree that mastery of English rules and sentence structures in combination with cultural conventions of language is not sufficient to acquire that language. Consequently, the learning process should touch upon cultural factors peculiar to the language in question. Put differently, learners are required to deepen their cultural awareness in the target language and ought to acquire the conventions of the culture and traditions of the native language is markedly different from the culture of the target language (Copeland and Griggs, 1985: 37-9). One such an example in this respect concerns polite requests. In the Arabic language, one can ask the waiter to get some water, say, by using an imperative sentence and the waiter accepts this order without offence; on the contrary, imperative sentences as request in the English language are considered as offensive utterances and the addressee gets offended (Yule, 2006: 81-9). These differences have bearing on the language and language teaching and the learner should be aware of these dissimilarities and ought to take them into consideration when the foreigner issuing a variety of speech acts.

The use of tenses in the target and the source languages is another case in point; tenses in the Arabic language, for instance, are more detailed and sophisticated whereas their counterparts in the English language are relatively easy and manageable. Accordingly, Arab learners of English as a foreign language should pay attention to these peculiarities in both languages. It is worth mentioning that some sentences in the target language are well-formed linguistically, but they are not culturally appropriate, and their structure, hence, may lead to problems by the addressee (s). As a result, the of the target language's culture becomes an inevitable duty that the foreign language learner should perform on an equal footing with the linguistic properties of the language under discussion (ibid: 91-3).

4.1 Culture Elements

Elements of culture consist in beliefs, conventions, values, products, and the like. The main patterns of culture are:

1. Perspectives: This pertains to the way a given speech community think, feel, and value (Bodley, 1994: 20-3).

2. Practice: This phenomenon is related to how speech community members interact and communicate with each other.

3. Products: This subsection draws upon technology, music, literature, etc. in other words, it deals with the activities that the members of a speech community do and transfer to the next generation (ibid.).

It should be emphasized that products are objective and, hence, are easily handled, while perspective and practice are subjective and not easily identified. Likened to an iceberg, elements of culture are important to recognise; that is to say, some elements of a culture, likened to the top of an iceberg, can be seen clearly; others are implied and cannot be easily recognised and learners usually cannot manage the latter type with ease and comfort (ibid.).

Looked at from another perspective, a culture is analysed from three levels, namely surface, sub-surface, and deep dimension. Surface culture is represented by such things as food, traditional music, literature, and specific holidays. Sub-surface is reflected in the learner's body language, courtesy, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact in addition to the concept of time. Though these expressions are found in all cultures, they are not well considered and, of course, they are varied from one culture to another. Drawing on the third level of deep culture, one can say this level is the most difficult one to recognize by the learner because it is so ingrained (Hall, 1979: 20-5). Such a phenomenon is illustrated, for instance, in the nature of companionship and friendship which is different from one culture to another, and the learner is required to conceptualize such a feature and behave accordingly (ibid.).

4.2 Cultural Conventions

Students learning a second or foreign language are supposed to critically analyse the cultural norms and strategies inherent in their languages and those found in the target language. The teachers' task, here, is to collect books, newspapers, poetry, magazines, radio-tapes, and television shows to display the cultural differences, making the learner recognise the disparity in form and content between the first language and the foreign or second language (Kramsch, 1993: 30-5).

Following Palmer (1981: 25-8), our culture shapes our language. This intricate connection between language and culture is quite evident in so many phenomena in language and the world. Arabs use too many words in labeling the camel such as "بعير", "سفينة الصحراء", "جمل", etc. This is so because Arabs basically live in the desert in which so many kinds of camel live. Eskom people have many words for "ice" due to the fact that these people live in icy areas where they are surrounded by a variety of snow. Consistent with this theory, learners should be conscious to those phenomena and respond appropriately. Consequently, cultural differences should be observed carefully by a foreign language learner. Greeting someone in Korea is not suitable unless it is accompanied by the speaker's bow to the listener. Greeting in Arab culture, on the other hand, is considered defective if there is no hand shaking (ibid.). Such differences should be accommodated into the learner's competence of a given language.

Drawing upon the social competence of the learner, cultural competence is a necessary portion of language and social communication so called communicative competence. Being so, it is necessary to investigate the differences and similarities between the native and the target languages. If these differences are not recognised well, many problems would arise in this regard which ultimately culminate in breakdown in communication. Hopefully, the teachers of English would make use of the cultural differences that are found to overcome the difficulties and problems (ibid.).

Conclusions and Pedagogical Recommendations

Education in the 21st century requires providing learners with critical skills, creativity communication, collaboration, and life-long learning skills. In this regard, teachers are central to this vital change in education, developing innovative, inclusive, and learning-centered experiences by entrenching and implanting these competence abilities into education. Teachers should work on preparing learners to navigate complexity, contribute to society and shape a sustainable future.

Conclusions

Future studies must consider technology integration to support this transformative view, focusing on progress in a dynamic world. This study comes up with the following conclusions:

1. There are challenges in English or any other language teaching but the best approach to adopt in this domains is the one that is with few difficulties.
2. Because of their focus placed on writing and grammatical rules, the traditional approaches prove nothing but failure in this respect.
3. The English language teachers, especially senior ones, are biased to traditional teaching methods due to their incompetence in the recent language theories and their applications in teaching a second or foreign language.
4. Modern teaching strategies are attractive and appealing for theorists and teachers of English, in particular, the novice ones.
5. Linguistic areas such as syntax, semantics and pragmatics should be considered contextually, otherwise teaching and learning processes are hard to implement.
6. Communicative teaching and immersion strategies are excessively needed to bridge the gap between the instructor and the learner.
7. Self-education and more drills are on demand to strengthen the learner's linguistic and communicative abilities.
8. Mistakes and errors made by the students should be tolerated so that the learners would be encouraged and make progress in learning the foreign or second language.
9. Co-operative teaching, i.e. teaching made by the learners themselves apart from the teacher, is an excellent mechanism of teaching. This is so because the learner can feel relaxed and confident enough to perform a variety of linguistic activities.
10. Teachers should be engaged in training courses and lessons so as to scientifically and contextually develop their teaching abilities.

Pedagogical Recommendations

The researcher suggests the following pedagogical recommendations:

1. Teachers should use a variety of modern teaching and learning strategies in classrooms to increase the learner's motivation and participation.
2. Educational programmes should include various teaching and learning activities that help students develop their thinking abilities.
3. Students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning instead of depending only on the teacher, i.e. learner-centered classrooms.
4. Learning environments should be reliable and should include activities such as feedback,

rewards, and challenges to make learning more interactive.

5. Educational institutions should provide courses for training teachers on how to use modern teaching strategies.

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