



# An Evaluation Of Teaching English As A Foreign Language: Issues And Outcomes

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## ABSTRACT

Beginning as a dialect spoken by Germanic immigrants, English has seen significant growth and change over the last 1,500 years. Of the six thousand to seven thousand languages that still exist in the world, English is the most widely spoken. In addition to having a sizable population of native speakers, it also has, according to Broughton et al. in their book *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, "an equally widely distributed body of second language speakers, who use English for their day-to-day needs, (which) totals over 250 million." Lastly, if we include places where decisions pertaining to life and welfare are made and announced in English, we reach one-sixth of the global population. Both the need for qualified English teachers and the number of English language learners are continuously increasing. With a focus on teaching and learning English to non-native speakers, the current research will examine all of these difficulties, their causes, and possible solutions.

**Keywords:** Foreign language, Teaching English, Effectiveness, Virtual Teaching.

## 1. Introduction

English unites people globally, irrespective of their country or native tongue. "It is commonly termed the contemporary lingua franca, a language employed for communication among individuals who do not possess a common native language" (Riddell 2). All content is presented in English, including news broadcasts, television programs, popular music, podcasts, and scholarly journals. Moreover, English has assumed a significant role in national unity across several nations, from Sierra Leone to Malaysia. It serves as the national language for 29 countries, including the United States, Australia, Lesotho, and Liberia, and is an official language in an additional 15 nations. (Broughton et al. 3). English is used not just in its standard form but also as a Pidgin, which is an ad hoc language employed for communication between individuals who do not share a common language, exemplified by Tok Pisin, Kru Pidgin English, and Thai Pidgin English. According to Carter and Nunan.

English is progressively diverging from its historical origins as it serves as a medium for worldwide communication. The process is growing more diversified, raising questions about the validity of the label

'English.' The phrase 'global Englishes' has been used for many years, and it is conceivable that the plural 'Englishes' may ultimately supplant the singular 'English'. The increasing interest in learning the lingua franca has led to several concepts, including TESL, TESOL, and TEFL. The concept of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) pertains to the instruction of the English language to learners whose native languages vary. It is common in regions where English is the primary language.

Mispronunciation is the predominant challenge for English learners owing to the language's orthographic complexity. They tend to transfer phonological norms from their native language to English. Japanese speakers have challenges in articulating L and R sounds due to the absence of separate L or R phonemes in the Japanese language, which instead has a sound that amalgamates L, R, and D qualities. Adult learners, in contrast to child learners, often struggle to attain their language learning goals owing to elevated anxiety and self-awareness.

Kitano's study indicated that "speaking anxiety was correlated with test anxiety: students experienced heightened anxiety during oral performance as their fear of negative evaluation intensified." The anticipation of international travel and engaging with native speakers further intensified it (540). The pursuit of perfection hinders language learning. Kitano asserts that "The majority of students regarded speaking skills as paramount; consequently, they encountered heightened self-imposed pressure to excel in this domain, potentially engendering increased fear and tension during speaking activities" (540). The majority of students are always translating from their native language. I conducted a survey to gather the perspectives of English language educators. The data was collected from 12 English educators, including assistant and associate professors from India, Saudi Arabia, and Costa Rica, via a subjective questionnaire. Three of twelve educators said that a significant challenge faced by English learners was the frequent mental translation from their native language to English. Translating from one's native language adversely affects language learning and is a primary reason many language learners fail to achieve proficiency in their target language.

A common mistake among language learners is too focusing on grammar. In several classrooms, educators excessively prioritize the enhancement of pupils' grammatical skills at the expense of their fluency. Five of the twelve survey respondents emphasized the need of robust grammatical and lexical comprehension. Grammar is undeniably an essential component of the language learning process. Excessive emphasis on grammatical rules over fluency may perplex English learners. Novice language learners, who are in the process of acquiring English via translation from their home language, have significant challenges with untranslatable terminology and phrases, including slang such as "hillbilly," "spam," or "cool." Phrasal verbs and idioms provide an additional challenge for students. The erroneous use of phrasal verbs and idioms is a significant challenge for any English student, particularly due to the multitude of phrasal verbs that might originate from a single verb. For instance, there exists a plethora of phrasal verbs using the word "put": put off - to postpone, put up with - to endure, put down - to degrade, and put on - to outfit. Students often misuse idioms due to their significant departure from literal interpretations. For instance, being unwell does not necessitate going outside, and now, the phrase "excuse my French" does not correspond to the real usage of the French language. The bulk of English learners struggle with the apparently infinite division and subdivision of tenses, considering the plethora of tense

classifications: simple, continuous, perfect, and perfect continuous. Students often err in writing by conflating past and present tenses.

## **2. Issues in the Teaching of English**

Many English classes exhibit a rich cultural diversity. This presents several challenges in language acquisition, as language and culture are closely intertwined. In some cases, students may struggle to connect with the cultural context of the language they are studying. The authors state that "Cultural barriers are regarded as traditions that impede the process of understanding or teaching/learning entirely different languages, with body language, religious beliefs, etiquette, and social habits being particularly significant" (15). Certain students might require a period to acclimate to cultural differences and nonverbal cues during their English studies. Educators are required to provide a secure educational environment that ensures students from diverse cultural backgrounds feel at ease. Effective communication is essential, as "communication that lacks appropriate cultural content often results in an odd or humorous situation leading to misunderstanding and miscommunication."

The absence of motivation stands as the primary barrier to language education. For individuals not residing in an English-speaking country and lacking the necessity to engage with native speakers, it is common for students to experience a decline in motivation to persist with their language learning shortly after they start. An ESL instructor acknowledged in the study that the primary challenge lies in motivating adult learners to participate in English courses. The primary causes of poor motivation among students include outdated teaching equipment and techniques, unclear and ambiguous study materials, and a lack of a defined goal for learning English. Teachers can inspire students by instilling the three major aspects of motivation proposed by Alizadeh: a positive attitude towards the L2 community, enjoyment of learning, and external pressures.

Inadequate teaching methods and a scarcity of instructional materials are additional problems stemming from insufficient resources and inadequate teacher training. In developing countries such as India, English instruction continues to rely on outdated and ineffective methods, including grammar translation. The absence of teaching resources further complicates the task of creating engaging classes. An Indian survey participant identified a significant challenge: the absence of visual aids in the classroom. Furthermore, the curriculum in the majority of English classes is outdated and inadequate. Instruction in practical English is essential. The focus should shift from graduating individuals who struggle with writing applications or communicating in English to equipping them with practical English skills applicable in everyday situations. This includes listening to and comprehending announcements, reading contracts and articles, articulating their thoughts, engaging in conversations, and consuming news and broadcasts in English.

## **3. Solutions to the problems and obstacles in the instruction of English**

Establishing an engaging atmosphere is the first step toward enhancing the learning experience. The classroom environment undeniably affects students' learning and retention capabilities. A poll participant emphasized the need of a dynamic classroom environment. Employing gestures, visual aids, and props with verbal communication can facilitate educators in engaging with youngsters while enhancing their vocabulary and understanding. Educators need to encourage peer engagement, especially in English



Speaking classrooms. This further fosters harmony and collaborative principles among the kids. Nevertheless, the teacher must retain authority over this interaction to guarantee its instructional nature. To mitigate the problem of inadequate motivation among students, educators may use reward or incentive-based strategies in the classroom. Utilizing the learners' native language to a certain degree may be advantageous, especially for beginning English learners. Regular assessment of children's linguistic accomplishments may be quite beneficial. Bell and Bogan articulate: "An effective assessment program and suitable assessment practices advantage ELLs (English Language Learners) as the educator recognizes the efficacy of instruction." Educators must be equipped to instruct according to the requirements of their pupils. Study participants emphasized the need of selecting proficient teachers skilled in planning and execution. English lessons must to be made available to young children as well.

#### **4. Several Thought-provoking Opinions About Teaching English**

**Perspectives and Direct Experience** In this research, 12 participants took part in a survey regarding their experiences in teaching English. As we impart knowledge, our understanding deepens; it is essential to remain flexible and refrain from utilizing identical methods repeatedly. Imagination is essential in the teaching process. Individuals frequently associate proficiency in the English language with social status and distinction. Motivating students is beneficial. Recognizing their progress, regardless of its magnitude, is beneficial. Games can enhance students' engagement in the learning process. Although there have been significant improvements, English remains inaccessible to a portion of the population. Conducting a brainstorming session focused on the development of language skills proves to be highly advantageous. Students often encounter challenges related to effective communication, diminished confidence, waning interest in the subject matter, and various other concerns. Utilizing illustrations, one can instruct students to write as extensively as possible within a 10-minute timeframe. This facilitates the enhancement of their creative and English writing skills. Classes must be designed to engage students effectively, allowing them to use their native language during discussions to minimize any inhibitions they may have. Educators ought to have the capability to introduce new subjects, even those not included in the standard curriculum, in response to the needs of their students. Classroom activities such as presentations, debates, theater, pair work, and group discussions are all highly effective methods for engaging students. Classes ought to be designed to enhance engagement, prioritizing the encouragement of student interaction in English. Performing plays and stories in class can significantly improve spoken English skills. Proficiency in English is essential for career advancement. Utilization of advanced teaching software in the classroom is recommended. English exhibits a diverse range of characteristics. It is essential to appreciate the diverse dialects of Indian English rather than striving to unify them under a singular notion of "Standard English". Different instructional methods, including audio-lingual, community teaching, and direct instruction, ought to be utilized in the classroom setting. The ongoing need for translation from the local language presents a significant challenge. To mitigate this issue, it is advisable to introduce English education at an early age. Educators are encouraged to create an enhanced environment conducive to teaching and learning. They should implement diverse instructional strategies, maximize student exposure to English, reduce the use of native languages during class, and promote learning activities in both classroom and

extracurricular settings. Instructors can dismantle these barriers by elucidating the cultural meanings of terms that may be unfamiliar to our students. We can foster confidence in students by providing them with opportunities for practice and offering encouragement. The appeal of English arises from its position as the language of the colonizers, and we still bear the implications of colonization. Our enthusiasm for the Western world manifests as a deep interest in the English language. Enhancing the English language for non-native speakers can be achieved by integrating native cultures and experiences, thereby aligning it more closely with local contexts. Students often enjoy listening to the various accents and pronunciations of their classmates. This approach enhances the classroom atmosphere; however, it may lead to heightened self-awareness among certain students. The conclusion I have reached is that it is essential to convey to them that English is merely another language and that they ought to cease viewing it as something elite and magnificent. It is essential to address students' feelings of inferiority regarding their English proficiency. A psychological approach proves to be effective in English Language Teaching. Incorporating syllabus-based games and interactive activities, such as role-playing, enhances student interest in subjects and motivates them to engage in their studies. Instruction in the English language should commence at the primary level, incorporating a uniform syllabus applicable to all students, delivered by qualified instructors. Interactive teaching sessions are crucial. Students must be instructed on how to articulate words that contain silent letters in order to minimize pronunciation mistakes.

## **5. Outcomes and Drawbacks of Online Learning**

The era when traditional classroom instruction was the only option and online education was considered "restrictive" has passed. Palloff and Pratt assert that the demand for "virtual schooling" is escalating at an annual pace of around 30 percent, necessitating professional educators proficient in online instruction. Online learning programs, although being an established and sometimes criticized educational approach, are gaining traction due to the proliferation of the deadly virus. Gilbert asserts that "Online learning attracts a variety of students with differing academic requirements that traditional educational settings are inadequate or unable to fulfill." Online courses provide exceptional flexibility for both studying and teaching; "Online learning enables students to engage at times and locations that align with their educational requirements." Online education substantially reduces expenditures related to transportation and other expenses. Acquiring knowledge and imparting instruction from the convenience of one's home is markedly more advantageous. Online lessons are recorded for students who want to study at a later time. In addition, online courses are accessible to almost anybody with an internet connection and a compatible device. E-learning systems provide viable choices for diverse prospective learners, including school-averse individuals, patients in hospitals or at home owing to health issues, dropouts seeking to return to education, expelled students, single parents, and learners located in other states or countries (Chaney). Generally, online courses are more economical than conventional in-person programs. Students reduce expenses on both tuition and transportation. Moreover, online classrooms provide learner-centered individual sessions, allowing students to pose questions and engage with the instructor without the fear of embarrassment before their peers. Online education facilitates more individualized teaching.

## 6. Conclusions

While online education offers numerous advantages, it also presents certain challenges. The most critical challenge that emerges in the realm of online learning is the absence of essential technology. Students in underdeveloped nations and rural areas face significant barriers in accessing mobile devices or laptops. Even when they manage to invest their limited resources in such technology, they often encounter challenges with slow, unreliable, and costly internet connectivity. Students often express concerns regarding the lack of peer interaction in online programs when compared to traditional classroom settings. An engaging and dynamic social life on campus can be seen as a factor contributing to both high levels of persistence and satisfaction in learning.

The online learning environment lacks essential peer interaction, leading to a highly repetitive educational experience. It can be challenging to sustain motivation during the learning journey, particularly in the realm of online education. Students lacking motivation experience significant challenges in online learning due to the reduced interaction with instructors and peers. Online learning often leads to feelings of isolation among students; as noted by Gilbert, "Another hurdle that some learners struggle to overcome is the absence of an instructor in a given place and time throughout the semester" (13). Online learning offers a high degree of autonomy, which can be overwhelming for some learners, leading to procrastination and challenges in achieving their educational goals.

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