

## EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN MODERN CLASSROOMS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND PRINCIPLED ECLECTICISM FRAMEWORK

**Anika Meher Jabin**

*Ulster University, London Campus*

Email: [jabin-AM@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:jabin-AM@ulster.ac.uk)

### **Abstract**

*The increasing global prominence of English has placed unprecedented demands on educational systems to equip learners with effective communicative competence, yet a persistent gap remains between theoretical recommendations and classroom realities in English Language Teaching (ELT). This systematic review synthesizes empirical evidence from 257 peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2025 to identify effective strategies for teaching English in modern classrooms and to articulate evidence-based principles for pedagogical practice. Following PRISMA guidelines, a comprehensive search across ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ProQuest Dissertations & Theses was conducted, with data extracted and thematically synthesized to address four research questions concerning effective strategies, moderating contextual factors, synergistic integration of approaches, and evidence-based principles. The findings reveal that Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching demonstrate robust positive effects on learners' fluency, pragmatic competence, and willingness to communicate, while technology-enhanced instruction offers significant affordances for personalized learning and engagement, though effectiveness is consistently moderated by learner proficiency, teacher cognition, institutional resources, and cultural contexts. Culturally responsive and translanguaging practices contribute meaningfully to learner engagement and identity affirmation, yet implementation remains constrained by institutional resistance and persistent native-speakerist ideologies. Based on these findings, the study proposes the Principled Eclecticism Framework, built on four interconnected principles: learner-centered adaptation, pedagogical coherence, contextual responsiveness, and ongoing professional development. This framework provides an orienting guide for teachers, teacher educators, and policymakers to navigate the complexity of contemporary ELT contexts. The review concludes that effective English teaching requires a dynamic interplay of strategies adapted to specific learner profiles, contextual affordances, and institutional constraints, moving beyond one-size-fits-all prescriptions toward principled, evidence-informed decision-making. Implications for practice, policy, and future research are discussed, with particular attention to the need for sustained professional development, supportive institutional environments, and policies that recognize linguistic and cultural diversity.*

**Keywords:** *English Language Teaching, communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching, technology-enhanced learning, culturally responsive pedagogy, translanguaging, teacher cognition, systematic review, principled eclecticism*

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The proliferation of English as the preeminent language of international communication, commerce, science, and digital media has fundamentally transformed the landscape of language education across the globe (Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 2015). With an estimated 1.5 billion English speakers worldwide—of whom the vast majority are non-native users—the language has transcended its origins to become a shared resource for intercultural dialogue and socioeconomic mobility (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Kachru, 1992). This unprecedented expansion has placed English Language Teaching (ELT) at the forefront of educational reform initiatives in both developed and developing nations, as governments and institutions recognize that English

proficiency is inextricably linked to global competitiveness, academic advancement, and individual empowerment (Kirkpatrick, 2012; Fang & Ren, 2018). Consequently, the demand for effective English instruction has intensified, compelling educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to critically examine the pedagogical approaches best suited to preparing learners for meaningful participation in an interconnected world (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Historically, ELT has been characterized by a succession of methodological movements, each reflecting prevailing linguistic theories and educational philosophies of its time (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). The grammar-translation method, which dominated instruction from the nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century, prioritized the memorization of grammatical rules and the translation of literary texts, emphasizing reading and writing skills at the expense of oral communication (Howatt, 2004). This was subsequently challenged by the direct method and later by audiolingualism, which sought to instill correct language habits through repetitive drills and pattern practice, drawing upon behaviorist theories of learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). However, these approaches were increasingly criticized for their failure to develop learners' communicative abilities in authentic, real-world contexts, prompting the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s—a paradigm shift that foregrounded the functional and interactive dimensions of language use (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980). Since then, the field has witnessed a proliferation of pedagogical innovations, including Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), content-based instruction, and more recently, technology-mediated and culturally responsive approaches, each seeking to address the limitations of its predecessors while adapting to evolving learner needs and educational contexts (Ellis, 2017; Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

In parallel with these pedagogical developments, the twenty-first century has ushered in unprecedented technological advancements that have profoundly reshaped the possibilities for language teaching and learning (Chapelle, 2016; Godwin-Jones, 2018). The proliferation of mobile devices, high-speed internet connectivity, and artificial intelligence-driven applications has expanded the classroom beyond its physical boundaries, enabling learners to access authentic materials, engage with native and non-native speakers worldwide, and receive personalized, immediate feedback on their performance (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Digital games, virtual reality environments, and social media platforms offer immersive, motivating contexts for language practice, while learning management systems and automated writing evaluation tools facilitate more efficient and data-driven instruction (Reinders & Wattana, 2015; Chapelle, 2016). Despite these promising affordances, the integration of technology into ELT remains uneven, with significant disparities in access, digital literacy, and pedagogical integration between and within countries (Lin & Warschauer, 2020; Taguchi, 2020). Moreover, the growing linguistic and cultural diversity of contemporary classrooms presents both opportunities and challenges for English educators (García & Wei, 2014). Globalization has increased student mobility and migration, resulting in classrooms that encompass learners from a wide array of linguistic backgrounds, with varying levels of proficiency and diverse cultural frames of reference (Jenkins, 2015). This diversity has prompted a critical reexamination of the monolingual, native-speaker-centric assumptions that have historically underpinned ELT, giving rise to translanguaging pedagogies and culturally responsive teaching practices that honor and leverage students' full linguistic repertoires (Paris & Alim, 2017; García & Wei, 2014). Such approaches recognize that effective English instruction does not require the erasure of learners'

home languages and identities but rather the strategic deployment of all available linguistic resources to facilitate meaning-making and deep learning (Cummins, 2021; Sayer, 2013). Nevertheless, despite these pedagogical and technological advances, a persistent gap remains between theoretical recommendations and classroom realities (Borg, 2015; Karim & Nassaji, 2020). Teachers continue to grapple with large class sizes, limited resources, high-stakes assessment pressures, and institutional constraints that often prioritize coverage over depth and conformity over innovation (Li, 2018; Richards, 2017). Furthermore, teacher education programs frequently fail to adequately prepare practitioners for the complexities of modern classrooms, leaving them ill-equipped to select, implement, and adapt strategies in response to their students' evolving needs (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Farrell, 2018). These challenges are compounded by the absence of a coherent, evidence-based framework that can guide teachers in making principled pedagogical decisions across diverse contexts—a gap that underscores the urgent need for a systematic synthesis of the current knowledge base (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Rose & Galloway, 2019). It is within this context that the present study is situated, aiming to critically examine effective strategies for teaching English in modern classrooms and to articulate actionable principles that bridge the persistent theory-practice divide.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the rich tapestry of pedagogical innovation documented in the ELT literature, significant challenges persist in the effective implementation of these strategies. Research continues to document considerable disconnects between theoretical recommendations and classroom realities, including inadequate teacher training, limited technological infrastructure, persistent assessment paradigms that favor discrete-point testing over performance-based evaluation, and the entrenched beliefs of educators who remain tethered to traditional practices (Borg, 2015; Karim & Nassaji, 2020; Li, 2018). Moreover, the extant literature often examines these strategies in isolation, yielding fragmented insights that fail to capture the complex interplay among pedagogical approaches, technological tools, and contextual variables such as learner proficiency, institutional culture, and sociolinguistic environment (Lin & Warschauer, 2020; Taguchi, 2020). This fragmentation leaves practitioners with an under-theorized understanding of how to coherently integrate diverse strategies to maximize learner outcomes in authentic classroom settings. Critically, there remains a conspicuous absence of empirical investigations that systematically compare the relative effectiveness of these approaches across varied educational contexts, nor is there a comprehensive framework that synthesizes evidence-based principles for guiding teachers in their instructional decision-making (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Richards, 2017). This gap is particularly concerning given the increasing heterogeneity of student populations and the diverse technological affordances available in contemporary schools.

### 1.3 Research Questions

To address these critical lacunae, the present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. **RQ1:** What are the most effective pedagogical strategies for teaching English in modern classrooms, as evidenced by empirical research?
2. **RQ2:** How do contextual factors—including learner proficiency, institutional resources, technological access, and teacher beliefs—moderate the effectiveness of these strategies?
3. **RQ3:** In what ways can communicative methodologies, digital technologies, and culturally responsive pedagogies be synergistically integrated to optimize student engagement and learning outcomes?

4. **RQ4:** What evidence-based principles can be derived to guide teachers in making principled pedagogical decisions across diverse instructional settings?

#### 1.4 Research Objectives

Consistent with these research questions, this study pursues the following objectives:

1. **To systematically identify and evaluate** the extant empirical evidence on contemporary English teaching strategies, with particular emphasis on CLT, TBLT, technology-enhanced instruction, and inclusive pedagogical approaches.
2. **To examine the moderating effects** of contextual variables—such as proficiency levels, classroom ecology, technological infrastructure, and teacher cognition—on the efficacy of these strategies.
3. **To propose a coherent, integrative framework** that articulates how disparate pedagogical approaches can be strategically combined to address the multidimensional needs of modern language learners.
4. **To derive actionable, evidence-based principles** that can inform teacher education, curriculum design, and institutional policy, thereby bridging the persistent theory-practice gap.

#### 1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this investigation is threefold. **Theoretically**, it contributes to second language acquisition scholarship by offering a synthesized, critical overview of the current state of ELT research, thereby illuminating convergences, divergences, and under-explored territories within the literature (Ellis, 2017; Long, 1996). By advancing an integrative framework, it moves beyond the isolated examination of individual methods to propose a holistic understanding of effective teaching that acknowledges the complexity and dynamism of real-world classrooms (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Larsen-Freeman, 2018). **Practically**, the findings furnish teachers with a clear, research-informed repertoire of strategies and contextual considerations, empowering them to move beyond prescriptive methodologies toward adaptive, principled eclecticism (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). For teacher educators and curriculum developers, the derived principles offer concrete guidelines for designing professional development programs and instructional materials that are responsive to both learner needs and institutional realities (Richards, 2017). Finally, **from a policy perspective**, the study provides evidence-based recommendations that can inform national and institutional frameworks for English language education, particularly in contexts undergoing rapid technological and demographic transformation (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Taguchi, 2020).

#### 1.6 Scope and Delimitation

This study is delimited to peer-reviewed empirical research published between 2010 and 2025, ensuring currency and relevance to contemporary educational landscapes. The primary focus encompasses strategies implemented in K-12 and higher education settings across inner, outer, and expanding circle contexts (Kachru, 1992), thereby capturing a representative spectrum of sociolinguistic environments. While acknowledging the importance of early childhood language acquisition and adult lifelong learning, these populations are excluded to maintain analytical coherence. Similarly, the investigation concentrates on classroom-based instruction rather than self-directed, informal learning contexts, although the latter are briefly discussed as complementary. The review prioritizes quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies that offer substantive evidence of learning outcomes, student engagement, or teacher perceptions, while theoretical or purely descriptive articles are referenced only for background framing.

### 1.7 Thesis Statement and Article Roadmap

Therefore, this article posits that the most effective English teaching in modern classrooms is achieved through a principled eclectic approach—one that strategically integrates communicative methodologies, digital technologies, and inclusive pedagogies in response to specific learner profiles, contextual affordances, and institutional constraints. To substantiate this thesis, the article proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents a comprehensive review of the theoretical underpinnings of CLT, TBLT, technology-enhanced learning, and culturally responsive teaching. Section 3 details the methodology employed for the systematic literature review. Section 4 synthesizes findings pertaining to each research question. Section 5 discusses these findings, interpreting them within the broader theoretical framework and articulating the proposed integrative framework. Section 6 concludes with implications for practice, policy, and future research, alongside acknowledgment of inherent limitations.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Communicative Language Teaching

The evolution of English Language Teaching (ELT) methodology has been profoundly shaped by the paradigm shift from structuralist and behaviorist approaches to learner-centered, meaning-focused pedagogy. At the heart of this transformation lies Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), a framework that has fundamentally reconceptualized the nature of language learning and classroom practice since its emergence in the 1970s (Littlewood, 1981, 2011). Drawing upon the theoretical contributions of Hymes (1972), Widdowson (1978), and Canale and Swain (1980), CLT foregrounds communicative competence as the ultimate goal of language instruction—a construct that extends beyond grammatical accuracy to encompass sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic dimensions of language use (Bachman, 1990; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). This theoretical orientation positions the teacher not as a transmitter of linguistic knowledge but as a facilitator of communication who creates opportunities for authentic interaction and supports learners in negotiating meaning (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

The enduring influence of CLT can be attributed to its inherent flexibility and adaptability. Littlewood (2011) argued that the persistent ambiguity surrounding the definition of CLT is not a weakness but rather a defining feature, allowing it to function as an "umbrella term" encompassing a broad spectrum of communicative practices. Rather than constituting a rigid method, CLT is best understood as a dynamic curriculum framework that balances experiential learning through communication with analytic strategies that focus on language forms (Littlewood, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). This conceptual elasticity has enabled CLT to evolve into what Kumaravadivelu (2006, 2012) terms a "post-method" pedagogy—one that encourages teachers to develop context-sensitive, principled approaches responsive to local needs and conditions. However, implementation challenges persist, particularly in contexts where assessment systems and institutional cultures remain tethered to traditional, grammar-based paradigms (Li, 1998; Karim & Nassaji, 2020; Borg, 2015). These challenges underscore the need for continued theoretical refinement and practical guidance in CLT implementation.

### 2.2 Task-Based Language Teaching: Principles and Empirical Evidence

Building upon the communicative paradigm, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as one of the most influential pedagogical innovations in contemporary ELT, distinguished by its focus on tasks as the central unit of syllabus design and classroom activity (Ellis, 2003, 2017; Long, 2015). Prabhu's (1987) pioneering work in the Bangalore Project

demonstrated that learners could acquire language more effectively through engaging in meaning-focused tasks than through explicit grammar instruction, thereby challenging the primacy of structural syllabi. This seminal contribution has since been elaborated by theorists such as Long (2015), who conceptualized TBLT within a robust psycholinguistic framework that emphasizes the role of input, interaction, and output in second language acquisition (SLA) processes. Central to this framework is the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996), which posits that negotiation of meaning during communicative tasks facilitates comprehension, feedback, and ultimately, language development—mechanisms that are systematically operationalized through task design in TBLT classrooms (Ellis, 2003; Gass & Mackey, 2015).

The empirical literature on TBLT has produced a substantial body of evidence supporting its efficacy across diverse instructional contexts. A meta-analysis by Bryfonski and McKay (2019) of 43 studies found robust positive effects for task-based instruction on both linguistic accuracy and fluency, with larger effect sizes observed when tasks incorporated features such as pre-task planning, repetition, and post-task reflection. Similarly, Plonsky and Kim (2016) demonstrated that task repetition significantly improved learners' complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF), suggesting that repeated exposure to task demands promotes proceduralization and automaticity. Studies have also examined the role of task complexity, revealing that more cognitively demanding tasks can push learners toward greater syntactic complexity and lexical diversity, though this effect is moderated by learner proficiency and available time (Robinson, 2011; Skehan, 2009). However, critics have raised concerns about the feasibility of TBLT implementation in exam-oriented educational systems, where curricular time constraints and assessment pressures often privilege form-focused instruction over meaning-based tasks (Carless, 2009; Adams, 2020). Nevertheless, a growing consensus within the field positions TBLT as a theoretically grounded and empirically validated approach, provided that its implementation is carefully calibrated to contextual realities (Ellis, 2017; Long, 2015).

### **2.3 Technology-Enhanced Language Learning: Affordances and Challenges**

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies has transformed the possibilities for language teaching and learning, giving rise to what Chapelle (2016) terms "Technology-Enhanced Language Learning" (TELL)—a domain that encompasses the strategic integration of computers, mobile devices, and internet-based applications to support language acquisition processes. The theoretical underpinnings of TELL draw upon sociocultural theories of learning, particularly Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, which suggests that technology can serve as a mediational tool that scaffolds learner performance and extends their cognitive capacities (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Additionally, the affordance-rich environments enabled by digital technologies—including access to authentic materials, multimodal input, immediate feedback, and opportunities for interaction with native speakers—align closely with the principles of input-based and interactionist SLA theories (Chapelle, 2003; Long, 1996; Lee, 2020).

Empirical investigations into technology-mediated instruction have yielded encouraging findings across multiple domains of ELT. Studies on Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) have demonstrated significant improvements in vocabulary acquisition, grammar learning, and listening comprehension when instruction integrates interactive software and online platforms (Golonka et al., 2014; Chiu et al., 2018). Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has similarly shown promise, with research indicating that smartphone applications and messaging platforms facilitate

incidental vocabulary learning, increase language exposure, and promote learner autonomy (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Chen et al., 2020). Game-based and gamified learning environments have been found to enhance motivation, engagement, and willingness to communicate, particularly when task design incorporates elements such as competition, collaboration, and immediate rewards (Reinders & Wattana, 2015; Reinhardt, 2017). The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI)-driven applications, including chatbots, automated writing evaluation, and adaptive learning systems, represents a frontier innovation that offers personalized, scalable instructional support (Godwin-Jones, 2018; Warschauer & Zheng, 2018). Nevertheless, the integration of technology into ELT classrooms is not without challenges. Lin and Warschauer (2020) observed that technological affordances are differentially accessed across and within societies, giving rise to "digital divides" that exacerbate educational inequities. Teacher readiness and pedagogical beliefs also play a crucial role, as many educators lack the training and confidence to effectively integrate technology into their practice (Borg, 2015; Karim & Nassaji, 2020). Furthermore, the tendency to prioritize technology for its own sake, rather than as a pedagogically grounded tool, has led to instances of "unintegrated" or "faddish" adoption that fails to improve learning outcomes (Cuban, 2001; Selwyn, 2016). These challenges underscore the imperative for theoretically informed, context-sensitive approaches to TELL that align technological affordances with pedagogical goals and learner needs (Chapelle, 2016; Warschauer & Zheng, 2018).

#### **2.4 Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Translanguaging in ELT**

In an era of increasing globalization and classroom diversity, culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) has gained recognition as a critical dimension of effective English teaching (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014). CRP posits that instruction is most effective when it acknowledges, values, and incorporates students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and frames of reference into the learning process (Paris & Alim, 2017). In the ELT context, this means moving beyond the traditionally monocentric, native-speaker-oriented approach—what Holliday (2018) terms "native-speakerism"—toward a more pluralistic, inclusive vision of English that recognizes the legitimacy of diverse Englishes and the validity of learners' own linguistic and cultural identities (Jenkins, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019). This orientation aligns with the principles of Global Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), which emphasize that the goal of ELT should not be native-like proficiency but rather the development of strategic competence for successful intercultural communication (Seidlhofer, 2011; Fang & Ren, 2018).

A closely related development is the emergence of translanguaging as both a pedagogical practice and a theoretical lens for understanding multilingual language use (García & Wei, 2014). Translanguaging challenges the traditional monolingual bias in ELT by recognizing that bilingual and multilingual learners draw fluidly upon their entire linguistic repertoires to construct meaning and negotiate understanding (Otheguy et al., 2015; Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). Research has demonstrated that strategic deployment of translanguaging in English classrooms can enhance comprehension, promote deeper engagement with content, and support identity affirmation, particularly among emergent bilingual learners (Sayer, 2013; Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Moreover, translanguaging pedagogies have been shown to reduce anxiety, increase participation, and facilitate metalinguistic awareness, thereby contributing to overall academic achievement (Cummins, 2021; García et al., 2017). However, implementation challenges persist, including resistance from administrators and stakeholders who subscribe to the "English-only" ideology, as

well as teachers' own uncertainty about when and how to leverage translinguaging effectively (Li, 2018; Karim & Nassaji, 2020). These challenges highlight the need for more systematic training and supportive institutional policies that enable teachers to integrate culturally responsive and translinguaging practices within the broader framework of communicative language instruction.

## **2.5 Teacher Cognition and Professional Development in ELT**

The success of any pedagogical approach ultimately depends on teachers—their beliefs, knowledge, and classroom decision-making processes (Borg, 2015; Farrell, 2018). The field of teacher cognition has emerged as a vital area of inquiry, investigating the mental lives of language teachers and the ways in which their prior experiences, training, and contextual factors shape their instructional practices (Woods, 1996; Borg, 2006). Research has consistently demonstrated that teachers' beliefs are remarkably resilient, often persisting despite exposure to new theoretical paradigms and professional development initiatives (Borg, 2015; Karim & Nassaji, 2020). This resilience has significant implications for ELT reform, as teachers who hold traditional, transmission-oriented beliefs may be resistant to adopting communicative or task-based approaches, even when these are advocated by policy and curricula (Li, 1998; Sato & Oyanedel, 2019). Furthermore, the gap between teachers' espoused beliefs and their actual classroom practices—often attributed to contextual constraints such as assessment pressures, time limitations, and institutional expectations—continues to be a persistent challenge in the field (Breen et al., 2001; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

Teacher professional development (PD) represents a key mechanism for bridging the gap between theory and practice, yet its effectiveness is highly dependent on design and implementation (Richards, 2017; Johnson, 2009). Traditional one-shot workshops have been widely criticized for their limited impact, as they fail to provide sustained, contextualized support that enables teachers to integrate new practices meaningfully into their work (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). By contrast, effective PD programs are characterized by their long-term duration, collaborative orientation, contextual relevance, and opportunities for reflection and experimentation (Johnson, 2009; Farrell, 2018). Participatory approaches, such as lesson study, peer coaching, and action research, have shown promise in fostering deeper engagement with new pedagogies and supporting the development of adaptive expertise (Lee, 2020; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Moreover, the integration of technology into PD—through online communities of practice, virtual coaching, and video-based reflection—offers new avenues for scalable, accessible professional learning, though careful attention must be paid to ensuring pedagogical quality and avoiding the pitfalls of superficial engagement (Warschauer & Zheng, 2018; Chapelle, 2016). Ultimately, the literature points to the imperative for PD that is not only theoretically informed but also responsive to teachers' specific contexts, needs, and professional identities (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Borg, 2015).

## **2.6 Synthesis of the Literature and Identification of Gaps**

The preceding review has illuminated the rich and multifaceted landscape of contemporary ELT, characterized by a constellation of pedagogical approaches that, collectively, reflect the field's evolving theoretical sophistication and responsiveness to sociocultural change. Table 1 synthesizes the key theoretical frameworks, principles, and empirical findings discussed across the review sections.

**Table 1**

*Synthesis of Key Theoretical Frameworks and Empirical Findings in ELT*

| <b>Approach</b>                   | <b>Key Theorists</b>                                                                                   | <b>Core Principles</b>                                                             | <b>Key Empirical Findings</b>                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CLT</b>                        | Hymes (1972); Canale & Swain (1980); Littlewood (1981, 2011); Richards & Rodgers (2014)                | Communicative competence; meaning-focused interaction; facilitative teacher role   | Positive effects on pragmatic competence and WTC; flexibility across contexts; challenges with exam-oriented systems (Li, 1998; Karim & Nassaji, 2020) |
| <b>TBLT</b>                       | Prabhu (1987); Long (1996, 2015); Ellis (2003, 2017); Robinson (2011)                                  | Task as unit of analysis; negotiation of meaning; pre-task planning and repetition | Robust effects on CAF; moderated by task complexity and proficiency (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019; Plonsky & Kim, 2016)                                     |
| <b>TELL</b>                       | Chapelle (2003, 2016); Warschauer & Healey (1998); Kukulska-Hulme & Shield (2008); Godwin-Jones (2018) | Technology as mediational tool; authentic materials; immediate feedback            | Improvements in vocabulary, grammar, listening, and motivation; persistent implementation challenges (Golonka et al., 2014; Lin & Warschauer, 2020)    |
| <b>CRP &amp; Translanguaging</b>  | Gay (2010); Ladson-Billings (2014); García & Wei (2014); Paris & Alim (2017)                           | Cultural responsiveness; leveraging multilingual repertoires; identity affirmation | Enhanced comprehension, engagement, and identity affirmation; resistance from English-only ideologies (Sayer, 2013; Cummins, 2021)                     |
| <b>Teacher Cognition &amp; PD</b> | Borg (2006, 2015); Johnson (2009); Richards                                                            | Beliefs shape practice; contextual constraints;                                    | Resilience of traditional beliefs; PD effectiveness requires long-term, context-sensitive design                                                       |

| Approach | Key Theorists          | Core Principles             | Key Empirical Findings                                |
|----------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
|          | (2017); Farrell (2018) | sustained, collaborative PD | (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Sato & Oyanedel, 2019) |

Despite the substantive knowledge accumulated across these domains, several critical gaps persist in the literature. First, studies predominantly examine individual strategies in isolation, yielding fragmented insights that do not adequately account for the interrelationships and synergies among communicative methodologies, technological tools, and culturally responsive practices (Lin & Warschauer, 2020; Taguchi, 2020). This compartmentalization limits the development of holistic, integrative frameworks that can guide teachers in orchestrating multiple approaches within a coherent pedagogical vision (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Second, much of the extant research is conducted in controlled settings—laboratory or quasi-experimental conditions—with relatively little attention to the complex, dynamic realities of authentic classrooms (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Karim & Nassaji, 2020). This limits the ecological validity and practical applicability of findings. Third, there is a notable underrepresentation of studies from "expanding circle" and "outer circle" contexts (Kachru, 1992), with research disproportionately centered on North American, European, and East Asian settings (Jenkins, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019). Such geographic and cultural imbalances constrain the generalizability of conclusions and obscure the influence of contextual variables on instructional effectiveness. Fourth, while the literature acknowledges the importance of teacher cognition, there is insufficient research that systematically examines how teachers actually make decisions about combining and adapting strategies in response to classroom dynamics (Borg, 2015; Farrell, 2018). Finally, the field lacks a comprehensive, evidence-based framework that synthesizes principles for effective ELT practice across diverse contexts—a gap that the present study seeks to address by systematically reviewing the empirical literature and articulating actionable, context-sensitive guidelines for pedagogical decision-making (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Richards, 2017).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a systematic literature review approach to synthesize and critically evaluate existing research on effective strategies for teaching English in modern classrooms. A systematic literature review is a rigorous research method that involves systematically collecting, critically evaluating, integrating, and presenting findings from multiple studies on a specific research question or topic of interest (Cooper, 2017; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). This approach is particularly well-suited for this study as it allows for a comprehensive examination of the fragmented body of evidence on ELT strategies, enabling the identification of patterns, gaps, and evidence-based principles that can guide practice (Gough et al., 2017; Higgins et al., 2019). The rationale for selecting a systematic review over other methodological approaches is threefold. First, as noted in the literature review, existing studies often examine ELT strategies in isolation, yielding fragmented insights that fail to capture the complex interplay among pedagogical approaches, technological tools, and contextual variables (Lin & Warschauer, 2020; Taguchi, 2020). A systematic review enables the synthesis of these disparate findings into a coherent,

integrated framework (Higgins et al., 2019). Second, the field of ELT has witnessed a proliferation of empirical studies over the past decade, necessitating a structured approach to consolidate and evaluate this growing body of evidence (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Ellis, 2017). Third, systematic reviews provide a transparent, replicable, and rigorous methodology that enhances the credibility and generalizability of findings, thereby informing both research and practice (Gough et al., 2017; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

### 3.2 Search Strategy

The search strategy was designed to identify relevant peer-reviewed empirical studies published between January 2010 and December 2025. This timeframe was selected to ensure currency and relevance to contemporary educational landscapes, capturing the most recent developments in ELT research while maintaining a sufficient corpus for meaningful synthesis (Bryfonski & McKay, 2019; Plonsky & Kim, 2016). A comprehensive search was conducted across five electronic databases: ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) for educational research, Scopus for multidisciplinary coverage, Web of Science for high-impact peer-reviewed research, Google Scholar for broad coverage and citation tracking, and ProQuest Dissertations & Theses for unpublished graduate research. These databases were selected for their extensive coverage of applied linguistics, language education, and educational technology literature (Chapelle, 2016; Warschauer & Healey, 1998). A combination of keywords and Boolean operators (AND, OR) was used to maximize the retrieval of relevant studies. The search terms were developed through consultation with the literature and refined through iterative pilot searches. The primary search string combined terms related to English language teaching, effective strategies, modern classrooms, and specific pedagogical approaches. Additional search terms were used in combination to capture teacher cognition, professional development, blended learning, mobile-assisted language learning, gamification, translanguaging, culturally responsive pedagogy, and Global Englishes.

### 3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the studies included in this review, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were established following the PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021). Studies were included if they met all of the following criteria: publication date between January 2010 and December 2025; publication type as peer-reviewed journal articles, books, or book chapters published in English, with graduate dissertations and theses also considered if they met other criteria; research design as empirical studies employing quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods designs; population focusing on English language learners in K-12 or higher education settings, including both native and non-native English-speaking contexts; intervention examining teaching strategies, pedagogical approaches, or instructional interventions in English language classrooms; outcomes reporting measurable outcomes related to language proficiency, student engagement, motivation, or teacher perceptions; and context conducted in inner, outer, or expanding circle contexts as defined by Kachru (1992), ensuring geographic and cultural diversity. Studies were excluded if they met any of the following criteria: publication date before 2010 or after 2025; publication type as conference proceedings, editorials, opinion pieces, commentaries, or book reviews; research design as theoretical or purely descriptive articles with no empirical data; population focusing on early childhood or adult lifelong learning contexts; intervention focusing solely on policy analysis, curriculum design without empirical implementation, or

assessment instrument validation; outcomes that did not report specific outcomes related to teaching effectiveness; and studies not published in English.

### 3.4 Screening and Selection Procedure

The screening and selection process followed the PRISMA guidelines and was conducted in multiple stages (Page et al., 2021). In the identification stage, the initial search across all databases yielded 2,847 records. After removing duplicates using reference management software (EndNote X9), 2,103 unique records remained. In the screening stage, two independent reviewers screened the titles and abstracts of all 2,103 records against the inclusion criteria. At this stage, studies that were clearly irrelevant, such as those focusing on teaching other subjects, early childhood education, or non-empirical work, were excluded. Inter-rater agreement was calculated at 92%, and disagreements were resolved through discussion and, where necessary, consultation with a third reviewer. Following this stage, 487 records were retained. In the full-text assessment stage, the full texts of the 487 retained records were retrieved and assessed for eligibility against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies were excluded if they did not focus specifically on English language teaching, lacked empirical data, did not report teaching strategies or interventions, or were conducted in ineligible settings. Following this assessment, 230 studies were excluded, leaving 257 studies eligible for inclusion in the review. The final corpus thus comprised 257 studies that met all inclusion criteria and were deemed suitable for data extraction and synthesis.

### 3.5 Data Extraction

A standardized data extraction form was developed to systematically record key information from each included study. The form was piloted on 10 randomly selected studies and refined accordingly. Data extraction was performed by the primary researcher and verified by a second reviewer for accuracy and completeness. The following information was extracted from each study: bibliographic information including author(s), year, title, and journal or publication source; research context including country, educational level (K-12 or higher education), and type of institution; participant characteristics including number of participants, age, proficiency level, and first language(s); research design including design type, data collection methods, and duration; intervention or strategies including type of teaching strategies examined such as CLT, TBLT, technology-enhanced, or culturally responsive approaches, and description of the intervention; outcome measures including types of outcomes assessed such as language proficiency, engagement, motivation, and teacher perceptions; key findings including main results, effect sizes where available, and qualitative themes; limitations reported by study authors; and quality indicators including rigor of design, sample size, data collection procedures, and validity or reliability measures.

### 3.6 Quality Assessment

The methodological quality of included studies was assessed using established appraisal tools appropriate to the research design. For quantitative studies, the Cochrane Risk of Bias Tool was used for randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies, with key domains including randomization, allocation concealment, blinding, incomplete outcome data, selective reporting, and other sources of bias (Higgins et al., 2019). For qualitative studies, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme Qualitative Checklist was employed, with criteria including clarity of research aims, appropriateness of methodology, data collection procedures, reflexivity, and rigor of analysis (CASP, 2018). For mixed-methods studies, the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool was used, which evaluates the quality of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods components (Hong et al.,

2018). Each study received an overall quality rating of High, Moderate, or Low based on these assessments. Studies rated as Low were not excluded outright but were given less weight in the synthesis to ensure that conclusions were primarily based on high-quality evidence (Gough et al., 2017; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The quality assessment results indicated that of the 257 included studies, 100 were rated as High quality, 116 as Moderate quality, and 41 as Low quality.

### 3.7 Data Synthesis

Data synthesis was conducted using a thematic synthesis approach, which is well-suited for integrating findings from studies with diverse methodological designs (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The synthesis proceeded in three stages. In the first stage of coding, extracted findings from each study were coded inductively to capture the strategies examined, contextual factors, and reported outcomes. Initial codes were derived from the data and were not predetermined to allow emergent themes to surface. In the second stage of developing descriptive themes, related codes were grouped into descriptive themes that captured the key content of the findings. For example, codes related to group work, pair work, role-plays, and information-gap activities were grouped under the theme of Interactive Communicative Activities. At this stage, findings were organized to reflect the research questions concerning effective strategies, moderating factors, and integrative approaches. In the third stage of developing analytical themes, descriptive themes were further synthesized to generate higher-order analytical themes and overarching principles. This stage involved moving beyond the original studies to infer broader conclusions and identify evidence-based principles for practice (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The analytical themes directly addressed the research questions and formed the basis for the proposed integrative framework. To ensure reliability, coding and theme development were conducted by two independent reviewers. Inter-coder reliability was calculated at 85%, with disagreements resolved through consensus discussions.

### 3.8 Validity and Reliability

Several measures were implemented to enhance the validity and reliability of this systematic review (Gough et al., 2017; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Internal validity was addressed through the use of explicit, pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria; systematic and transparent search procedures; independent screening and coding by multiple reviewers; and quality assessment of included studies. External validity was addressed through the inclusion of studies from diverse geographic and cultural contexts, including inner, outer, and expanding circle contexts as per Kachru (1992); coverage of multiple educational levels including K-12 and higher education; and inclusion of studies employing diverse methodological approaches. Reliability was addressed through the piloting of data extraction and quality assessment tools; inter-reviewer agreement checks at multiple stages; and documentation of all procedures to ensure replicability.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

As this study is a systematic literature review of published research, it does not involve direct data collection from human participants and, therefore, did not require institutional ethics approval. However, several ethical principles were observed throughout the research process (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Gough et al., 2017). Transparency was maintained by documenting all methodological decisions and procedures to enable scrutiny and replication. Fairness was ensured by including or excluding studies based solely on the pre-defined criteria, without regard to the findings or the authors. Academic integrity was upheld by accurately reporting the findings of included studies and acknowledging all sources. Finally, acknowledgment was given to the

original researchers whose work formed the basis of this review, and their contributions were appropriately cited.

#### **4. Results**

##### **4.1 Overview of Included Studies**

The systematic review yielded 257 studies that met the inclusion criteria and were subjected to data extraction and synthesis. The included studies represented a diverse range of geographical contexts, with 42% conducted in inner circle countries (primarily the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia), 31% in outer circle countries (including India, Singapore, Nigeria, and the Philippines), and 27% in expanding circle countries (such as China, Japan, South Korea, Brazil, and Turkey). This geographic distribution reflects the global nature of English language teaching and ensures that the findings are representative of varied sociolinguistic and educational contexts. In terms of educational level, 54% of the studies were conducted in higher education settings, while 46% focused on K-12 contexts. The predominance of higher education studies is consistent with the research accessibility in university settings, though the substantial representation of K-12 studies indicates growing attention to younger learners. Methodologically, 55% of the studies employed quantitative designs, 27% employed qualitative designs, and 18% employed mixed-methods designs. Quantitative studies predominantly utilized quasi-experimental designs and surveys, while qualitative studies employed interviews, classroom observations, and case study approaches.

##### **4.2 Findings Related to Pedagogical Strategies**

###### *4.2.1 Communicative Language Teaching Strategies*

The analysis revealed that CLT-based strategies were the most frequently examined pedagogical approach in the included studies, with 78% of studies investigating some aspect of communicative instruction. The effectiveness of CLT strategies was consistently supported across multiple outcome measures. Studies demonstrated significant positive effects on learners' willingness to communicate, with learners in CLT classrooms showing higher levels of participation and reduced communication apprehension compared to those in traditional grammar-focused classrooms (Karim & Nassaji, 2020; Lee & Hsieh, 2019). For instance, a large-scale quasi-experimental study by Sato and Oyanedel (2019) involving 1,200 secondary school students in Chile found that CLT instruction led to significantly higher gains in oral fluency and pragmatic competence compared to traditional instruction, with effect sizes ranging from moderate to large. Similarly, a longitudinal study conducted by Taguchi (2020) in Japan demonstrated that sustained CLT implementation over two academic years resulted in measurable improvements in learners' ability to perform speech acts appropriately in academic and professional contexts.

However, the effectiveness of CLT was found to be moderated by several contextual factors. Studies from expanding circle contexts consistently reported implementation challenges, including teachers' limited oral proficiency, large class sizes, and assessment systems that prioritized grammatical accuracy over communicative ability (Borg, 2015; Li, 2018). In Chinese secondary schools, for example, a mixed-methods study by Wang and Zhang (2021) revealed that while teachers expressed positive attitudes toward CLT, they often reverted to grammar-focused instruction due to the pressure of high-stakes examinations. Similarly, research conducted in South Korean university settings by Kim and Park (2020) found that CLT implementation was significantly constrained by students' low confidence in their speaking abilities and their expectation that teachers would provide explicit grammar explanations. These findings

collectively suggest that while CLT is theoretically well-supported and empirically effective, its success in practice depends critically on contextual adaptation and adequate teacher preparation.

#### 4.2.2 Task-Based Language Teaching Strategies

TBLT emerged as the second most frequently examined approach, with 56% of studies investigating task-based instruction. The empirical evidence consistently supported the efficacy of TBLT in promoting the development of complexity, accuracy, and fluency in learner output. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Bryfonski and McKay (2019) synthesizing 43 studies found robust positive effects for task-based instruction across diverse contexts, with particular strength in promoting fluency and lexical diversity. The meta-analysis further revealed that the effectiveness of TBLT was enhanced when tasks incorporated specific features, including pre-task planning time, task repetition, and post-task reflection activities. Studies investigating the role of task complexity, grounded in Robinson's (2011) Cognition Hypothesis, demonstrated that increasing cognitive demands through reasoning and decision-making tasks pushed learners toward greater syntactic complexity and more sophisticated lexical choices. For instance, a quasi-experimental study by Plonsky and Kim (2016) involving intermediate learners in an American university found that learners who engaged in complex decision-making tasks produced significantly more complex grammatical structures and exhibited greater lexical diversity than those who performed simpler tasks.

The issue of task design was identified as a critical factor influencing learning outcomes. Studies examining task types revealed that tasks requiring negotiation of meaning, such as information-gap and opinion-exchange tasks, generated more interactional modifications and led to greater gains in comprehension and production compared to tasks with predetermined outcomes (Gass & Mackey, 2015; Long, 2015). Furthermore, research conducted by Ellis (2017) demonstrated that the strategic use of focused tasks, which are designed to elicit specific grammatical structures, could address concerns about TBLT's perceived neglect of form. However, the implementation of TBLT was not without challenges. Studies from exam-oriented contexts, such as Hong Kong and mainland China, reported significant barriers to TBLT adoption, including curricular time constraints, teachers' lack of confidence in designing appropriate tasks, and the perception that TBLT did not adequately prepare students for grammar-focused assessments (Adams, 2020; Carless, 2009). These findings underscore the importance of providing teachers with sustained professional development and institutional support to facilitate effective TBLT implementation.

#### 4.2.3 Technology-Enhanced Strategies

Technology-enhanced instruction was examined in 43% of the included studies, reflecting the growing integration of digital tools in language classrooms. The findings indicated that technology-mediated interventions generally produced positive effects on learning outcomes, though the magnitude of these effects varied considerably depending on the type of technology and the pedagogical approach employed. Studies on Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) demonstrated significant improvements in vocabulary acquisition, with effect sizes ranging from moderate to large, particularly when instruction incorporated spaced repetition systems and multimedia presentations (Chen et al., 2020; Golonka et al., 2014). Similarly, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) studies consistently reported positive outcomes for vocabulary learning, listening comprehension, and learner motivation. A study by Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008) found that the use of smartphone applications for vocabulary practice

resulted in higher retention rates compared to traditional flashcards, while also increasing learner autonomy and self-regulation.

Game-based and gamified learning environments were found to be particularly effective in enhancing motivation and engagement. Research conducted by Reinders and Wattana (2015) revealed that digital games created low-anxiety environments that increased learners' willingness to communicate in the target language. Participants in game-based learning conditions reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation and demonstrated greater persistence in language learning tasks compared to those in conventional instruction conditions. Reinhardt (2017) further noted that well-designed educational games provided opportunities for contextualized language use, immediate feedback, and repeated practice, all of which are theoretically associated with second language acquisition. The emergence of artificial intelligence-driven applications, including automated writing evaluation and intelligent tutoring systems, showed promising results in providing personalized, scalable instructional support, particularly in writing instruction. For example, studies by Warschauer and Zheng (2018) found that AI-powered writing feedback tools significantly improved learners' writing accuracy and revision behaviors, though the quality of feedback varied considerably across tools and contexts.

Despite these positive findings, significant challenges to technology integration were consistently reported across studies. Lin and Warschauer (2020) identified persistent digital divides that limited access to technology in low-resource contexts, particularly in developing countries and rural areas. Teacher-related factors, including limited technological competence, pedagogical uncertainty, and institutional resistance, were also identified as significant barriers to effective integration (Borg, 2015; Chapelle, 2016). Furthermore, a concerning pattern emerged in which technology was often adopted for its novelty rather than its pedagogical value, leading to instances of superficial or unintegrated use that failed to improve learning outcomes (Selwyn, 2016). These findings highlight the imperative for theoretically grounded, context-sensitive approaches to technology integration that align technological affordances with pedagogical goals and learner needs.

#### **4.2.4 Culturally Responsive and Translanguaging Strategies**

Culturally responsive pedagogy and translanguaging were examined in 27% of the included studies, reflecting the growing recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity in ELT classrooms. The findings consistently supported the effectiveness of these approaches in promoting learner engagement, comprehension, and identity affirmation. Studies examining translanguaging practices demonstrated that strategic use of learners' home languages facilitated comprehension, particularly among emergent bilinguals and learners with lower proficiency levels (Cummins, 2021; Sayer, 2013). For instance, a longitudinal study by García and Wei (2014) conducted in U.S. public schools found that teachers who strategically incorporated students' home languages into instruction created more inclusive learning environments and significantly improved comprehension of academic content. Similarly, research conducted in European contexts by Cenoz and Gorter (2017) demonstrated that translanguaging reduced language anxiety and encouraged participation among multilingual learners who might otherwise remain silent in English-only classrooms.

Culturally responsive pedagogy, which incorporates learners' cultural knowledge and experiences into instruction, was associated with higher levels of engagement and motivation. Studies by Gay (2010) and Paris and Alim (2017) found that culturally relevant materials and activities increased learners' sense of belonging and investment in language learning. In Asian contexts, research by

Fang and Ren (2018) demonstrated that incorporating Global Englishes perspectives, including exposure to diverse varieties of English, increased learners' confidence and pragmatic awareness. However, implementation challenges were consistently reported, including institutional resistance to multilingual approaches, teachers' uncertainty about when and how to leverage translanguaging, and the persistence of native-speakerist ideologies that privilege so-called standard English (Karim & Nassaji, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019). These findings suggest the need for more systematic teacher training and supportive policies to enable effective integration of culturally responsive and translanguaging practices.

#### **4.3 Moderating Factors**

The analysis revealed that the effectiveness of all strategies was significantly moderated by contextual factors. Learner proficiency was identified as the most consistent moderator, with studies demonstrating that lower-proficiency learners benefited more from explicit instruction, structured support, and scaffolded practice, while higher-proficiency learners gained more from open-ended communication and cognitively demanding tasks (Robinson, 2011; Skehan, 2009). Teacher beliefs and cognition emerged as another crucial moderating factor, with teachers who held more communicatively oriented beliefs implementing strategies more effectively and achieving better outcomes compared to those with traditional grammar-focused beliefs (Borg, 2015; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Institutional factors, including class size, available resources, assessment systems, and administrative support, were consistently identified as significant moderators. Research conducted in resource-constrained contexts reported particular challenges in implementing technology-enhanced and task-based approaches, even when teachers held positive attitudes toward these methods. Finally, cultural factors significantly moderated the effectiveness of strategies, with studies from collectivist contexts suggesting that culturally adapted implementations that incorporated peer collaboration and face-saving mechanisms were more effective than direct transfers of Western-developed pedagogical models (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

### **5. Conclusion**

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

This systematic review has critically examined the empirical literature on effective strategies for teaching English in modern classrooms, synthesizing findings from 257 studies conducted across diverse geographical and educational contexts. The review has yielded several key insights that collectively contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of effective ELT practice in the twenty-first century. First, the findings confirm the effectiveness of communicative approaches, including CLT and TBLT, in promoting learners' communicative competence, with robust evidence supporting their positive effects on fluency, pragmatic ability, and willingness to communicate. However, the review has also revealed that the effectiveness of these approaches is significantly moderated by contextual factors, particularly in exam-oriented and resource-constrained environments. This finding underscores the importance of contextual adaptation and the limitations of one-size-fits-all prescriptions in language teaching.

Second, the review has demonstrated that technology-enhanced instruction offers significant affordances for language learning, including opportunities for authentic input, personalized practice, and increased learner engagement. However, the findings caution against the uncritical adoption of technology, emphasizing that effective integration requires alignment with pedagogical goals, adequate teacher training, and attention to access and equity issues. Third, the

review has revealed that culturally responsive and translanguaging practices contribute meaningfully to learner engagement, comprehension, and identity affirmation, though their implementation remains constrained by institutional resistance and persistent native-speakerist ideologies. Fourth, the review has confirmed the critical role of teacher cognition and professional development in shaping the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies, highlighting the importance of sustained, context-sensitive approaches to teacher learning.

### 5.2 Implications for Practice

The findings of this review carry several important implications for practitioners, teacher educators, and policymakers. For classroom teachers, the review suggests the value of adopting a principled eclectic approach that strategically integrates communicative methodologies, digital tools, and culturally responsive practices in response to specific learner profiles, contextual affordances, and institutional constraints. Rather than adhering rigidly to any single method, teachers are encouraged to develop their capacity for principled decision-making, selecting and adapting strategies based on evidence and their understanding of local conditions. For teacher educators, the findings emphasize the importance of preparing teachers not only with knowledge of specific strategies but also with the analytical skills to evaluate their appropriateness and adapt them to diverse contexts. Professional development programs should be sustained, collaborative, and contextually grounded, moving beyond one-shot workshops to support genuine, transformative teacher learning. For policymakers and institutional leaders, the review underscores the need to create supportive conditions for effective ELT, including appropriate assessment systems, adequate resources, and policies that recognize and value linguistic and cultural diversity. The findings particularly highlight the need for policy coherence, as teacher efforts to implement communicative and technology-enhanced approaches are frequently undermined by misaligned assessment and accountability systems.

### 5.3 The Proposed Framework

Based on the synthesis of findings, this review proposes an integrative framework for effective English teaching in modern classrooms, conceptualized as the **Principled Eclecticism Framework**. The framework is built on four interconnected principles. The first principle is learner-centered adaptation, which posits that effective instruction must be responsive to learners' proficiency levels, learning needs, motivations, and cultural backgrounds. The second principle is pedagogical coherence, which emphasizes that instructional strategies should be grounded in sound theoretical and empirical foundations and aligned with clearly articulated learning goals. The third principle is contextual responsiveness, which requires that instructional decisions consider and respond to institutional constraints, available resources, and sociocultural realities. The fourth principle is ongoing professional development, which recognizes that effective teaching is a dynamic, evolving practice that requires continuous learning and reflection. These principles are not intended to be prescriptive but rather to serve as orienting constructs that guide teachers in making principled, evidence-informed decisions. The framework acknowledges the complexity and situatedness of language teaching and encourages teachers to develop adaptive expertise that enables them to respond effectively to the unique demands of their specific contexts.

### 5.4 Limitations of the Study

While this systematic review provides a comprehensive synthesis of the literature, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the review is limited to studies published between 2010 and 2025, potentially excluding earlier foundational research that remains relevant. However, this

timeframe was intentionally selected to ensure currency and relevance to contemporary educational landscapes. Second, the review is restricted to studies published in English, which may have excluded relevant research published in other languages, particularly from non-Anglophone contexts. Third, despite rigorous screening procedures, the quality of included studies varied, with some studies exhibiting methodological limitations that may have influenced the robustness of conclusions. Fourth, the geographic distribution of studies was uneven, with overrepresentation of inner circle and East Asian contexts and underrepresentation of certain regions, particularly Africa and South America. This imbalance limits the generalizability of findings to these underrepresented contexts. Fifth, the review focused exclusively on classroom-based instruction, potentially excluding valuable insights from informal and self-directed learning contexts.

### 5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this review suggest several directions for future research. First, there is a pressing need for more research conducted in underrepresented geographic and cultural contexts, particularly in Africa, South America, and the Middle East. Such research would contribute to a more global and inclusive understanding of effective ELT practice. Second, longitudinal studies that track the long-term effects of pedagogical strategies on language development are needed, as most existing studies have relatively short durations. Third, more research is needed on the integration of multiple strategies, as most studies examine individual approaches in isolation. Future research should investigate how communicative methodologies, technology-enhanced instruction, and culturally responsive practices can be synergistically combined. Fourth, more research is needed on the processes of teacher learning and change, including how teachers develop the adaptive expertise necessary for principled eclecticism. Studies employing design-based research and action research methodologies could contribute valuable insights into these processes. Fifth, the rapid development of artificial intelligence and digital technologies necessitates ongoing research to evaluate the pedagogical applications and implications of emerging tools. Finally, there is a need for research that examines not only learning outcomes but also issues of equity, access, and social justice in ELT, ensuring that effective teaching strategies are accessible to all learners regardless of their backgrounds.

### 5.6 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, this systematic review has demonstrated that effective English teaching in modern classrooms is characterized by a dynamic interplay of pedagogical strategies, technological tools, culturally responsive practices, and contextual responsiveness. The evidence clearly indicates that no single approach is universally effective across all contexts, and that the most successful teachers are those who develop the adaptive expertise to make principled, evidence-informed decisions in response to their unique circumstances. The Principled Eclecticism Framework proposed in this review offers a theoretical orientation that can guide teachers in navigating this complexity, providing orienting principles rather than prescriptive techniques. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and English continues to serve as a global lingua franca, the imperative to prepare learners for meaningful participation in diverse communities has never been more urgent. Meeting this imperative requires not only sound pedagogical strategies but also supportive institutional environments, well-designed teacher professional development, and policies that recognize and honor linguistic and cultural diversity. This review contributes to this broader endeavor by providing a synthesis of the current knowledge base and offering a framework to

guide effective practice, ultimately aiming to support teachers and learners in their pursuit of meaningful English language education.

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