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Teaching Language Skills

ROBY MARLINA

The Intellectual and Social Context

Teaching language skills is often the key focus or main element in the language-teaching practice. Knowledge of the theory and practice of teaching receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing) in English is one of the key learning objectives of many TESOL teacher-education programs in universities around the world. It is also what many preservice and in-service teachers often wish to learn more about in order to help them develop more effective pedagogical strategies for guiding their current and prospective students learn English. As English is a language that is dynamic in nature, so are the principles and practices of teaching those language skills.

In the last 30 years or so, TESOL scholars and practitioners may have witnessed, either through publications or conference presentations, a paradigm shift in the applied linguistics and TESOL disciplines. The unexpected changes to the world's linguistic and cultural landscapes brought about by the forces of globalization have led to significant anomalies that consequently challenge the relevance and applicability of current scientific knowledge, beliefs, or perspectives. In particular, the unprecedented worldwide spread of English, leading to significant changes to the forms, use, demographic backgrounds, and the status of the English language, has led to the emergence of a paradigm of English as an international language; a paradigm in the applied linguistics and TESOL disciplines that challenges the so-called "native-English-speaker" based perspectives of English language usage, communicative strategies, and pedagogical strategies. Since English is today used predominantly by linguistically and culturally complex users of English who are naturally active agents in the process of creation of world Englishes, these native-English speakers have the least authority to judge the appropriateness of the use of English language or to decide the most effective teaching methodology. As English is a pluricentric language with pluralized or pluralizing grammars, vocabulary, accents, discourse conventions, and pragmatic strategies, the teaching and learning of a pluricentric international lingua franca should be based on entirely

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different pedagogical principles and practices, especially ones that promote multidialectal democracy (Marlina, 2014).

Major Dimensions

Recent literature (e.g., Marlina, 2014; McKay & Brown, 2016) has suggested that the teaching of language skills should be underpinned or informed by a dynamic perspective of language variation, which advocates the conceptualization and treatment of linguistic differences as sociolinguistically normal and necessary rather than as deficient errors. Using the linguistic usage and practices of the native-English speakers as the model for teaching language skills has been critiqued not only as unrealistic, disempowering, and even imperialistic, but also irrelevant to today's globalized or globalizing social communicative contexts that are characterized by variations in linguistic practices and cultural behaviors.

In this scenario, the major dimension of teaching language skills, informed by the EIL perspective, involves teaching students how to use English—both spoken and written—to shuttle appropriately between diverse varieties, cultures, and communities; to negotiate effectively across cultures and Englishes; to take ownership of their own use of English; and to develop critical awareness of existing assumptions and practices that promote linguistic and cultural inequality.

Changes over Time

Teaching Speaking

During the prevalence of grammar-translation approach from the turn of the 19th century until the late 1940s, the teaching of speaking skills was not perceived as important until the introduction of the direct method and audio-lingual method. From this time onwards, one very common focus of the teaching of speaking skills has often been on establishing optimal classroom conditions for learners to speak. This view is often grounded in cognitive and social psychology, second language acquisition, or educational psycholinguistics. Informed by these disciplines or areas of inquiry, various theoretical concepts such as comprehensible input, communicative competence, negotiated interaction, and communication strategies, have been widely taught in TESOL teacher-education program. Consequently, the teaching of speaking skills has often been incidental and non-explicit (House, 2012). In practice, some secondary and tertiary English language-teachers often organize the course with a list of discussion topics, and use reading materials such as newspapers, magazines, and other sources hoping that they will somehow generate interest and prompt students to “talk.” Though this is still a practice in many English language classrooms today, it may not be effective in developing and enhancing oral skills, and suggests that the teaching of speaking skills should be based on the following characteristics of a real speech or the nature of oral discourse:

- Unlike writing, speech is ephemeral and reciprocal.
- Speech is composed mainly of short phrases and clauses.
- Words can be vague, ambiguous, and generic.
- Speaking is either planned (e.g., a formal speech) or unplanned (e.g., a discussion or a conversation).
- Speech contains fillers and hesitation markers.
- Speech may contain “errors,” slips, and repetitions, because it is instantaneously produced.
- Speakers use fixed or chunks of phrases.
- Speech contains colloquial expressions.
- Speech shows variation (e.g., speaking in formal and informal settings), reflecting the context, speaking aims, and the roles of the speakers.
- Meanings are negotiated and jointly constructed by the interactants.

Over the last two decades, the importance of oral skills and therefore using authentic or real-life communication in teaching materials has been emphasized by the paradigm of communicative language teaching. Many internationally marketed English language textbooks have been developed based on this paradigm. However, the ways in which the oral discourse or spoken language are represented and taught in these textbooks (including the paradigm that informs the design of these textbooks) are disempowering and misleading.

First, several scholars have observed that the speaking materials do not truly reflect what speaking looks like or is practiced in reality (like the aforementioned characteristics of spoken language). The majority of spoken discourse taught in internationally marketed textbooks is drawn extensively from the grammar of written English, conveying a problematic message to the students that they have to learn how to speak like a written text. The crucial linguistic elements, strategies (e.g., backchannelling strategies), and discourse markers through which oral discourse is jointly constructed in natural spoken discourse are absent. Colloquial expressions are rare, and overly well-formed utterances are frequent.

Secondly, the dialogues or oral discourses taught in those materials are often scripted rather than naturalistic. Not only do these scripted dialogues “deauthenticate” or “denaturalize” speech, but they also do not equip students with the ability to employ communicative strategies in unpredictable situations. Therefore, naturalistic speech samples based on English users’ intuitive reactions to communicative situations can be used as one of the pedagogical sources for teaching speaking.

Thirdly and most importantly, the pragmatic strategies (for example, giving compliments, responding to compliments or complaints), oral discourse strategies (such as conversational openings or closings), and politeness conventions taught by those textbooks are based on the sociocultural norms of users of English from inner-circle countries. Consequently, classroom-based researchers have claimed that many English language learners from outer- and expanding-circle countries (see *ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA* for an explanation of this concept) may find those strategies and conventions unfamiliar and difficult to

apply to their own sociocultural contexts. English as a lingua franca research has shown how users of English from those circles employ various communicative strategies that may be different from those of inner-circle users' to negotiate meanings (see *ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA* for more details). Despite these differences, there are few misunderstandings, and fewer difficulties in comprehending each other's intended meanings. In unpredictable situations, some users of English may let it pass or "creatively exploit, intentionally appropriate, locally adapt, and communicatively align the potential inherent in the forms and functions, items and collocations of the English language they use in their performance as the need arises" (House, 2012, p. 189). Communicative strategies such as code-switching, accommodation, strategic repetition, and newly reinterpreted discourse markers such as "you know," "yeah/yes," and "so" are employed and "normalized" (see *ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA* for further details). More communicative strategies can be found in spoken English corpora, documenting varieties of spoken English from various inner-circle, outer-circle, and expanding-circle countries that are suggested for pedagogical modeling (see McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2004, for a list of corpora of spoken Englishes).

The changes in the way English is spoken in different sociocultural contexts by multilingual and translingual speakers of English have generated a number of pedagogical implications for teaching speaking skills in a classroom context. Table 1 shows a number of pedagogical approaches that have been used by language teachers to teach speaking.

Teaching Listening

Similar to speaking, listening was not recognized as a skill in its own right until the era of CLT (communicative language teaching). In TESOL as well as other disciplines (for example, education, communication studies, and psychology), the rapid forces of globalization such as increased human mobility across the globe, and advancement of information communication technology that has exposed users of English to diverse spoken Englishes, have led to a further emphasis on the importance of listening and teaching listening skills. Both global phenomena and the recognition of listening as an active process, involving "physiological and cognitive processes at different levels as well as attention to contextual and socially coded acoustic clues" (Vandergrift, 2004, p.4), have constructed listening as the most difficult skill to learn and teach.

Listening specialists have observed that the approaches to the teaching of listening skills have evolved over the past 50 years: from the audio-lingual approach, to haphazard listening to texts, to the "question-answer" comprehension approach, and to an interactional or strategy-based approach (Vandergrift, 2004; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). However, teachers' choice of pedagogical approaches is likely to be influenced by the way in which the nature of listening is conceptualized: listening as comprehension or acquisition (Richards, 2008). In other words, do teachers intend to develop their students' knowledge and strategies to

Table 1 Pedagogical approaches used by language teachers to teach speaking.

<i>Pedagogical approaches</i>	<i>Key focus and classroom strategy</i>
Halliday's systemic functional linguistics	<p>Focuses on the functional use of language: how the contextual factors—field (what), tenor (who), and mode (how)—inform text productions within a particular sociocultural context.</p> <p>An example of classroom strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice a language pattern or using certain lexicogrammatical features to perform a particular speech function (e.g., storytelling).
Discourse/exchange structure analysis	<p>Focuses on basic patterns observed conversational exchanges, especially how speakers negotiate their positions within a talk, and how the surrounding utterances inform their responses.</p> <p>An example of classroom strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-R-F: Initiation, Response, and Follow-up.
Conversation analysis	<p>Focuses on the microinteractional level of talk (e.g., adjacency pairs, turn taking, fillers, or turn-transfer) and how this informs meaning makings.</p> <p>An example of classroom strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning how to signal one's turn to speak or to recognize the interlocutors' signals.
Pragmatics	<p>Focuses on the intended (or unintended) purposes of using those strategies to get things done, their contextual meanings, and their cross-cultural differences.</p> <p>An example of classroom strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning how to indicate one's agreement or objections.
Cognitive approach	<p>Focuses on developing the fluency, complexity, and accuracy of oral production.</p> <p>An example of classroom strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-speaking, speaking, and post-speaking Learning activity. • Rehearsal, repetition, and recycling.
The Vygotskian perspective	<p>Focuses on providing cognitive support (or scaffolding activities) to help students developmentally learn how to accomplish something that they could not previously do.</p> <p>An example of classroom strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-to-peer interactions or expert–novice interactions.
Critical discourse analysis	<p>Focuses on how the use of language contributes to serve the interests of the dominant groups and at the same time suppresses the voices of the marginalized.</p> <p>An example of classroom strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing “delicate” issues in class, and practice learning how to rebut, clarify, or hypothesize to consolidate one's standpoint.

comprehend what they listen to? Or do they intend to instil in their students the ability to comprehend and learn something or do something further with what they have listened to and understood?

The perspective of listening as comprehension is grounded in an assumption that the purpose of listening is to extract meaning from messages (Richards, 2008). If the listener has understood and identified the intended meaning, attending to the form of messages is unnecessary unless they encounter severe problems in understanding the message. Since this perspective advocates the need to guide students to become effective listeners, there exist two approaches to the teaching of listening: bottom-up and top-down approaches, which have been widely discussed in the area of inquiry.

English-language teachers who adopt a bottom-up approach tend to adopt a view that comprehension happens when the incoming linguistic input—sounds (phonemes, syllables), words, sentences, clauses—is decoded, recognized, and understood. Therefore, a bottom-up pedagogical approach focuses on improving students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. For example, students are asked to complete tasks such as cloze listening or multiple choice listening comprehension questions, in which the ability to recognize key words, clauses divisions, transitional markers in a discourse, and key prosodic features (stress, or intonation) is developed and tested.

A top-down process emphasizes the importance of (activating) one's background knowledge as well as schemas or scripts (pragmatic/discourse conventions, discourse clues, topic familiarity) in order to comprehend the meaning of a message. Specifically, learners need to learn to develop both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies in order to "listen well." In developing metacognitive knowledge, students are encouraged to use their knowledge of people (themselves and interlocutors), task (purpose of a listening task or text organization/structure), and strategies (various strategies for enhancing comprehension) in order to help them comprehend what they listen to, and at the same time reflect on the effectiveness of using this knowledge. The second element is metacognitive strategies, in which learners are taught to plan their listening (e.g., identify learning objectives), self-monitor their listening progress, and evaluate their success against a set of criteria (see Vandergrift & Goh, 2012 for details). A diary on listening events and students' evaluation of their performance in those events, for example, can be used as a way to develop this knowledge and better listening skills.

Teaching Reading

Teaching or learning how to communicate is often associated with teaching or learning how to speak. The important role of reading skills in developing one's communicative competence has often been underestimated. What has been overlooked is the fact that many learners of English in some educational settings do learn the language predominantly by reading prior to speaking. An assumption that reading can enhance one's spoken and written communication skills has been

supported by several empirical works in the area of inquiry. The internationalization of the status of the English language has led to a further development in the way reading and reading pedagogy are conceptualized and practiced. Specifically, it has moved from a skill-based perspective to a sociocultural perspective of reading.

A skill-based perspective of reading conceptualizes reading as having the ability to recognize codes and to comprehend as well as interpret meanings of those codes. Pedagogically, English-language teachers guide their students who are at the early stage of learning English develop the skills to recognize the graphophonic forms of words or sentence structures and their meanings. Advanced learners of English can be taught a wide range of reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, making inferences, and guessing meanings and topics of a passage. Informed by a skill-based perspective, four major approaches to the teaching of reading skills—grammar-translation, comprehension questions and language work, skills-and-strategies, and extensive reading—have been developed and practiced by many (English) language teachers in different educational contexts. Though skills-and-strategies and grammar-translation approaches are the most popularly adopted ones, it is important to note that all four of these approaches are often mixed in an actual classroom, depending on the proficiency level, cultural contexts, preferred learning styles, and age groups.

The key issues or pedagogical concerns and implications that have been widely researched and discussed in this area of inquiry tend to be predominantly skill-based oriented. Scholars, researchers, and practitioners have explored and discussed ways to enhance word recognition and reading rate; to motivate students to read extensively and recognize the power of extensive reading; to improve linguistic knowledge through reading; and to develop curriculum for teaching strategies to read effectively in L2 (see Grabe, 2009). Although these issues are crucial and that the pedagogical approaches are proven to be effective, the skill-based view of reading is critiqued for viewing readers as passive agents and reading materials as “neutrally written texts.” In response to this and the internationalization of the English language, critical-literacy theorists have offered another view of reading: the social/discourse perspective of reading and its pedagogical approach. This perspective and its pedagogical approach will be presented in the next section.

Teaching Writing

In teaching writing skills, two of the most popular and compelling perspectives of L2 writing and its pedagogy are the contrastive rhetoric (henceforth CR) perspective and the cognitive process writing perspective. These two schools of thought have, to some extent, influenced and shaped how English-language teachers conceptualize writing in English and teach writing. Despite their influence, they have been criticized for promoting problematic views of L2 writing and its pedagogical principles and practices, and for ignoring the nature of writing as highly situated within a wide variety of contexts.

As a cross-cultural approach to studying and exploring the organizational patterns of written texts, CR was developed by Robert Kaplan in response to (a) the increase in the number of “non-English-speaking background” international students in US universities in the 1960s and (b) the need to develop pedagogical strategies to help these students develop academic English writing skills. Informed by his analysis and comparison of 600 academic essays written by the so-called “L2 writers” with a prototypical English essay, Kaplan proposed two major theoretical assumptions that underpin CR and that should inform the teaching of writing skills. Echoing Sapir-Whorfian theory of linguistic relativity, he argues that each language and each culture has a set of unique and distinctive thought patterns that significantly influence the rhetorical conventions. English language is represented by a straight line, the Oriental languages by a spiral or a centrifugal line, the Semitic languages by a zigzag, the Romance languages by a digressive line, and Slavic languages by a broken digressive line. Since L2 students write in English according to their L1 writing practices and home cultures’ rhetorical conventions—another Kaplan CR theoretical assumption—their writings in English are often inductive, digressive, content-focused, flowery, and reader-responsible. This negative transfer is used to explain the difficulties that L2 students experience in producing logically and linearly written writings in English. Based on the theoretical assumptions and the research findings, it is suggested that language practitioners teach writing skills by providing their L2 students with models or prescriptive templates for writing various written genres, the organization of which is shaped by English rhetorical conventions. For example, students can be asked to develop a clear outline of their writing, imitate models of a prototypical English essay, or reassemble scrambled paragraphs. As useful and compelling as CR research and its “product-oriented” pedagogical approach may sound, it has received a great deal of criticism from scholars in the field.

CR research has been criticized for its reductionist, essentialist, and deterministic orientation, its ethnocentrism (English being superior to other languages), its ignorance of hybridity and plurality of rhetorical patterns within one language and similarities between different languages and cultures, its suppression of students’ creativity and rhetorical choices, and its assimilationist orientation to writing pedagogy. In response to these criticisms, the inquiry has been renamed as “intercultural rhetoric,” which calls for the need to recognize dynamics within writing practices (see Connor, 2011). However, the view of L2 writers having lack of knowledge of the so-called “target-language” discourse conventions still persists, promoting problematic cultural and linguistic binaries. To challenge this deficit view of L2 writers and its use of inner-circle varieties of English as the yardstick, Kachru’s World Englishes approach calls for a legitimate recognition of the rhetorical styles and conventions practiced by outer- and expanding-circle users of English.

Although this liberating approach to writing and writing pedagogy has challenged a monocentric view of English rhetoric, the cultural difference promoted by the approach still to some extent echoes the essentialist assumptions of cultural difference promoted by CR research. From the lens of critical contrastive rhetoric, both Connor’s intercultural rhetoric and Kachru’s World Englishes approach have not taken into consideration the discursive construction of linguistic and cultural

differences, the sociopolitical dimensions of rhetorical forms, and unequal power relations embedded within educational practices (Kubota & Lehner, 2014). Therefore, language educators need to critically reflect on their conception of culture, language, and writing as well as the way they teach writing. Students and their writing practices or preferred rhetorical styles cannot be reduced or lumped into a particular category or label according to the language they speak, their nationality, or the culture in which they grew up. Rather, students should be seen as individuals with complex and diverse educational experiences, personal and institutional histories, and subjectivities.

Another approach to teaching writing skills that has been influential since the 1980s and that has been employed by language practitioners is the “cognitive process” writing movement. Unlike CR’s pedagogical focus on written products, this movement—led by Flower and Hayes (L1 writing) in 1981 and Zamel (L2 writing) in 1982—advocates the conceptualization of writing as process and meaning making. It stresses the need to focus on the mental behaviors of writers at work, or in other words, *how* writers write as opposed to *what* they write. Writing is seen as a nonlinear and complex process in which writers, regardless of their first language backgrounds and second language skills, discover, formulate, and reformulate their ideas, feelings, and “self” as they engage in meaning making. Therefore, pedagogically, this movement emphasizes the need to help students learn to discover and express their own voice; to recognize the importance of students’ knowledge; to help develop good writing strategies or habits such as, planning, drafting, revising; to encourage peer feedback; and to use students’ writing as the main source of texts in writing lessons.

Like CR, the cognitive process movement has also been criticized for its ignorance of a number of important contextual factors involved in writing. First, some experienced writers do not necessarily employ and subscribe to the “good” writing strategies suggested by the proponents of the process movement. For example, some experienced writers prefer to avoid revision and write perfectly constructed sentences as they go. Second, this movement has overlooked essay writing during strictly timed high-stakes examinations, such as International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), in which time for revising and polishing drafts is limited or perhaps absent. Third, the cognitive process movement has ignored the influence of readers’ expectations on writing. Lastly, the unequal power relation that may exist between the writers and the publishers/assessors has also been overlooked. What if the writers are not permitted to share knowledge of a particular topic from their own contexts or are assessed on knowledge on a particular topic of which the context is entirely unfamiliar to the writer? Therefore, the teaching of writing needs to take into consideration the influential role of the aforementioned contextual factors in shaping the way a writer writes. In light of this, the field of second language writing experienced another shift in emphasis from cognitive issues to social issues, which is known in composition studies as the “social turn.” This will be discussed in the next section.

Table 2 Pedagogical approaches for developing intercultural competence.

<i>Pedagogical approach</i>	<i>Classroom activity</i>
Cognitive teaching	Introduce some basic concepts such as speech acts, discourse strategies, politeness rules, turn taking. Introduce the hybridity and variability of the use of English in a lingua franca context.
Process teaching	Inspire students to constantly reflect on their experiences, process, or both of learning English. Observe, reflect, and write about their observations of the use of language in their own context.
Experiential teaching	Use simulations, role plays, or scenarios in which students are allowed to experience and resolve intercultural misunderstandings.
Critical teaching	Learn how to use language to work critically with stereotypes and prejudices.
Interactional sensitivity training	Observe and reflect on general rules of interactions such as how to detect and resolve misunderstandings.

Current Emphases in Work

Teaching Speaking

Though many of the approaches mentioned in the previous section still continue to exert influence on the way language teachers teach speaking skills, the extent to which they have been adopted to teach speaking across cultures and Englishes still remains inaudible and underresearched. The most recent suggestion for teaching speaking skills, in the light of the changing sociolinguistic reality of English, is the interactional approach to teaching speaking. Informed by the English as a lingua franca movement, intercultural pragmatics, as well as some of the pedagogical approaches mentioned in the previous section, the interactional approach to teaching speaking emphasizes the need to expose learners to interactions in English between diverse users of English in international settings; equip them with a metalanguage to describe and explain their own and interlocutors’ interactional strategies; raise their awareness of their own and interlocutors’ interactional behaviors; and develop intercultural competence. Therefore, in a classroom environment, the pedagogical approaches shown in Table 2 can be adopted (House, 2012).

Teaching Listening

Although the listening pedagogy has moved away from a sole focus on the linguistic aspects of comprehension to a metacognitive approach since the 1980s, observations of many language classrooms have revealed the employment of

both approaches by English-language teachers today in order to reflect real-world listening. However, some research studies have proved that these approaches are not necessarily effective in helping students listen well. Learners who focus and rely on the linguistic aspects often fail to listen well as contextual cues and sociocultural knowledge are ignored. Those who apply this knowledge in listening tend to neglect the linguistic input. In relation to this, several scholars have suggested the need to approach listening as both comprehension and acquisition.

Listening as acquisition emphasizes the importance of noticing and learning—in addition to comprehending—the new linguistic items during listening events. The input that one has noticed and learned may be incorporated into one's language repertoire in order to develop or further enhance one's competence. This perspective needs to be considered when preparing learners for using English in today's communicative contexts that are multicultural, multivarietal, and multilingual in nature. As previously mentioned, globalization increases exposure to diverse Englishes (and languages) with which users of English may or may not be familiar. Thus, the ability to understand all varieties and proficiency levels of speakers from inner-, outer-, and expanding-circle contexts or *comprehend-ability* (McKay & Brown, 2016), to shuttle between diverse speech and discourse communities, and to accommodate is crucial. When being exposed to unfamiliar varieties of Englishes, accommodation involves more than just passively comprehending these new Englishes, but also incorporating new linguistic items—that are important for the success of the current and future interactions—into one's repertoire. Pedagogically, listening cannot be taught on its own, and therefore, must be taught together with other skills. Different spoken Englishes can be incorporated into listening materials (see McKay & Brown, 2016). In these materials, for example, students can be prompted to take notice of features of new spoken Englishes and to write a listening journal about their exposure (see Galloway & Rose, 2014, for further details). A role-play scenario can be provided in which they act on and apply what they have learned.

Teaching Reading

The social/discourse perspective of reading advocates conceptualizing reading as a sociocultural process. Reading is the act of “enacting a complex and shifting set of identities, dispositions, and stances by which it becomes more a matter of interpretation than comprehension, as traditionally conceived” (Wallace, 2012, p. 267). Today's readers of English come from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds, and are therefore likely to bring their life experiences, cultural expectations, ideology, as well as a wide range of identities (social, linguistic, cultural, personal, and professional) as they engage in reading. Texts are socioculturally and ideologically shaped. Many English language teaching (ELT) textbooks published in inner-circle countries often reflect the values that are not necessarily in line with those of students and include several semantic phrases that

are unfamiliar to them (McKay & Brown, 2016). As they interact with these texts, they are engaged in identities constructions, and may choose either to “assimilate” into what has been written or read “against the grain.” In order to ensure identity maintenance and problematize texts that privilege certain groups of people and marginalize others, the social/discourse perspective of reading advocates that learners of English need to be taught to be critical readers rather than strategic readers. Pedagogically, employing a critical discourse analysis perspective which draws on linguistic tools provided by Halliday’s systemic functional grammar (i.e., field, tenor, and mode) to unpack the ideological impartiality of texts (see Wallace, 2012, for a comprehensive and detailed example of a reading lesson based on this perspective for beginner as well as advanced learners of English).

Teaching Writing

Rather than rejecting the process movement described in the previous section, the social turn is its extension, which is often described as “postprocess” or “postcognitivist” theory. Informed by social-interactionist theories of composition and Vygotskian social theory, the social turn advocates the view of writing as public, interpretive, and situated. These views of writing are centered on the assumption that meaning making is a result of one’s interactions with others rather than an individual’s product. Writing is a social process whereby writers write or change the way they write according to their purposes of writing, their relations with the reader, and any social/contextual factors that influence the relationship between writer and reader. What is interpreted as appropriate and comprehensible writing in one context may not always be similarly interpreted in another.

Pedagogically, the teaching of writing is not about providing students with foundational principles and rules of writing or a prescriptive template for writing. The forces of globalization have made it difficult to predict with full certainty that an employment of a particular model of written communication will guarantee success in today’s communicative exchanges that are often intercultural in nature. Therefore, based on the principle of situatedness, writing needs to be taught as *praxis*, meaning that students learn how to write according to their awareness as well as understanding of the social contexts in which they operate, and of the interlocutors with whom they interact. As students often shuttle between diverse contexts, they should also be engaged in learning to use various writing strategies and semiotic resources to help them do so.

Future Directions in Research, Work and Methodology

Though there has been a paradigm shift in the discussions on the teaching of language skills over the past 15 years, there has not yet been a clear translation of the EIL-informed pedagogical approaches into a classroom practice.

Teaching Speaking and Listening

In relation to the teaching of speaking, the extent to which the proposed interactional approach to teaching speaking skills has been adopted or is ready to be adopted by teachers for their own classroom contexts still remains underresearched. Descriptions of a program or course syllabus for teaching speaking from an EIL perspective and their efficacy in helping students develop speaking skills also need further exploration.

In relation to the teaching of listening, there are also a number of questions that are worth further consideration. Exposing students to diverse varieties of English in the world is not an easy task. Are there enough materials and resources available for students to access samples of all varieties and proficiency levels of speakers from inner-, outer-, and expanding-circle contexts? If there are, to how many varieties of English should students be exposed in order for teachers to be certain that their students have developed comprehend-ability? Due to the forces of globalization, the linguacultural backgrounds of those whom English language learners will interact in the future are often unknown. Therefore, how can comprehend-ability be developed, enhanced, and assessed? For test-oriented societies, are there enough spaces in the curriculum for English language educators to introduce their students to diverse varieties of English, and thus to assess their comprehend-ability?

Teaching Reading

Reading specialists suggest that English-language teachers should not passively follow or accept recommendations of applied linguists. The teaching of reading (and other language skills) needs to be contextualized by taking into consideration students' sociocultural background, proficiency level, language learning needs, and the sociolinguistic reality in which they live. Most importantly, it should not devalue practitioners' knowledge and experiences. Thus, future research in teaching reading needs to come from English-language practitioners who are advised to conduct their own action research in which the effectiveness of pedagogical principles and practices of teaching reading are reviewed based on their own practices, and from their own students' perspectives.

Teaching Writing

Although a recent review on research in teaching writing has shown that the teaching of writing has changed from transmission to transformation; from static forms of academic literacy to plurality; from deficit to possibility; and from "one-size-fits-all" to contexts-based, often the rhetoric does not match the actual classroom practices. Therefore, more research that explores and unpacks this mismatch is needed.

Second, as mentioned before, one of the main implications of the internationalization of the status of English is that English belongs to all users of English. Therefore, the teaching of writing should engage students in taking ownership of

their own writing and should go beyond emulating the inner-circle rhetorical varieties of English by identifying and rectifying grammatical errors that are problematic for L2 speakers of English (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2015). Writing pedagogy needs to focus on human agency, honoring the power of students in shaping and reshaping language to suit their communicative needs and to negotiate meanings. Students should be given a space to decide how they can use their cultural capital, plurilingual resources, and knowledge of rhetorical conventions in texts productions in a way that is meaningful to themselves as well as comprehensible to their targeted audience (see Canagarajah, 2015, for further details). The extent to which this space has been given to students in an actual classroom setting is still under-researched, and thus, needs further investigation.

Third, not everyone prefers to conceptualize difference as diversity. It may be viewed as deficiency. Thus, English-language teachers need to engage in unpacking the unequal power relations embedded within texts, texts production, and writing pedagogical practices. The question that needs to be asked is no longer, “What should students write?” Rather scholars, informed by critical applied linguistics and critical pedagogies, have encouraged teachers to ask: Is there a need to constantly learn how to write a particular text (e.g., academic essay)? Do they need to do it in real life? What are the political and ideological dimensions of the purpose of learning how to write a particular text with a particular rhetorical convention? Whose rhetorical convention is it? Whose interests do students serve after knowing how to write with a particular convention or style? Does learning a particular rhetorical style or convention support linguistic/cultural assimilation and perpetuate linguistic/cultural inequalities? With today’s linguistic heterogeneity, how can English teachers engage their students in working with and against English-only rhetorical expectations or conventions? Research on the teaching of writing skills should further explore the political dimensions of teaching writing and go beyond simply highlighting cultural differences in written texts or teaching structure, grammar, lexis, and writing strategies.

SEE ALSO: Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA); Cultural Attitudes Toward Language Variation and Dialects; Globalization, English Language Teaching, and Teachers; Skills-Based Training; World Englishes

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Suggested Readings

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