TRENDS IN ENGLISH TEACHING METHODS OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

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Abstract

This study aims to identify and describe the most widely used and emerging methods in English Language Teaching (ELT) from 2020 to 2025. Over the past five years, significant shifts have occurred in English teaching approaches due to rapid technological advancements, evolving student needs, and the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This research employs a qualitative method through document analysis, examining secondary data sources such as academic journals, scholarly books, and conference proceedings. The findings reveal tee major teaching approaches that have gained prominence in recent years: Blended Learning, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in ELT, and Gamification. These approaches are found to be effective as they promote more interactive, adaptive, and student-centered learning experiences. The results highlight how modern English teaching increasingly relies on technology integration and learner engagement. This article is expected to offer valuable insights for educators and future practitioners in selecting contextually appropriate and forward-thinking teaching strategies in line with today's educational challenges.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Teaching Method Trends, Blended Learning, Artificial Intelligence, Gamification, Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, English teaching methods have undergone various changes. Advances in technology, shifts in learning needs, and global conditions such as the pandemic have compelled educators to adjust their methods in the classroom. Currently, more adaptive, interactive, and student-centered approaches are increasingly being implemented. This indicates that the processes of learning and teaching can no longer rely solely on conventional methods.

One of the most obvious impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is the shift in the learning process from face-to-face meetings to online methods. At that time, many educators began to adopt new methods such as blended learning, which is a combination of online and face-to-face learning, as well as communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasizes the use of language in real situations. Such methods are considered more important as they encourage students to take an active role, think critically, and engage directly in the learning process.

In Indonesia itself, this change is also felt by many teachers and students, especially when the learning process must be conducted entirely online. This situation compels teachers to seek ways to ensure that students can grasp the material effectively, one of which is through the implementation of more communicative and technology-based methods.

Many experts agree with this change. Brown (2007) states that effective language teaching must consider the needs of the students as well as the social context in which they learn. Ellis (2019) also asserts that taskfocused and communication-oriented approaches have proven to assist students in using the language in a more functional and natural manner. The support from various theories emphasizes that innovation in teaching methods is essential to address the challenges of the current era.

Witnessing this situation, the author feels it is necessary to delve deeper into what has transpired with the trends in English language teaching over the past five years, particularly from 2020 to 2025. Are the methods employed in accordance with the current needs of the students, what are the most commonly used methods, and what makes them deemed effective.

Thus, this article aims to review various methods of English teaching that have developed over the past five years based on literature study findings. It is hoped that this writing can provide an initial overview for educators or prospective educators in determining the appropriate approach, particularly one that can be adapted to the evolving times and the current needs of students.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach through the use of document analysis methods. The data in this study was obtained from secondary sources, such as journal articles, academic books, and conference proceedings that discuss various methods of teaching English from 2020 to 2025. The documents were collected by conducting searches in several databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, ScienceDirect, and SINTA. The selection of documents was carried out for specific purposes, namely based on the relevance of the topic to the research focus, context relevance (postpandemic), and the quality of the publisher or author.

The data collection method was carried out by carefully reading the content of each document, followed by noting several key points relevant to the trends, methods, or approaches being discussed. The analysis was conducted using a thematic method, which involves identifying patterns or themes that recur across various sources, such as the utilization of technology, an emphasis on communication, and a shift from traditional methods towards more flexible and interactive approaches. The results of this analysis were then processed descriptively to understand the trends in English language teaching methods over the past five years and to provide insights that can be beneficial for practitioners and researchers in the field of English education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Summary of Reviewed Articles (2020–2025)

No.	Author(s)	Year	Title	Methodology	Main Findings
1	Vaishnav, P. B.	2024	Current Trends and Future Prospects in English	Mixed-method (literature, survey, case)	Highlights current and future ELT trends including tech, AI,

			Language Teaching (ELT)		gamification, personalization.
2	Hashim, A. A.	2025	Innovative Approaches in English Language Teaching	Comparative literature analysis	Modern (tech-based) methods are more effective than traditional approaches.
3	Sukmalasari, R., & Tarihoran, N.	2025	Historical Trends and Emerging Innovations in ELT	Systematic Review (PRISMA, 22 articles)	Identifies innovation shifts in ELT since the pandemic.
4	Crompton et al.	2023	AI and English Language Teaching: Affordances and Challenges	Systematic literature review (42 studies)	AI enhances writing and speaking skills; notes pedagogical and ethical challenges.
5	Wulantari et al.	2023	The Role of Gamification in English Language Teaching: A Literature Review	Literature review	Gamification improves motivation, collaboration, feedback, and active learning.
6	Ramalingam, V., Yunus, M., & Hashim, A.	2022	Blended Learning Strategies for Sustainable ESL Education	Systematic Review	Blended learning expanded post-pandemic; implementation remains uneven.

Results: Overview Trends in English Language Teaching Methods in 2020-2025

Analysis of literature and online sources indicates a significant advancement in the trends of English language learning methods from 2020 to 2025. In 2020, the most commonly applied methods included Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), and blended learning, along with several other methods such as ProjectBased Learning (PjBL), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Total Physical Response (TPR) also mentioned. The year 2021 showed an increase in technology usage with the introduction of Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR), while blended and hybrid learning continued to evolve into increasingly popular methods. The year 2022 exhibited strengthening and improvement of the previously established methods, accompanied by new innovations such as microlearning, adaptive learning, collaborative learning, and student-centered learning approaches. In addition, gamification is increasingly being implemented as a strategy to enhance student motivation and participation in learning English.

In 2023, the learning approach is more focused on deep learning and self-directed learning, along with an increasing use of AI in English language teaching. The year 2024 marks a rise in the use of AI and blended learning, emphasizing more personalized approaches and greater attention to ethics in the use of technology and more human-centered learning. By 2025, trends in education are increasingly moving towards the utilization of adaptive AI that can adjust to the individual needs of each student, Extended Reality (XR) technology, as well as more inclusive strategies that are sensitive to various learning needs, including neurodiversity and trauma-aware learning. The development of these trends indicates an adjustment in the way English is taught in response to changes in technological and pedagogical demands over the past five years.

With the explanation regarding the development of trends in English language learning methods from year to year, the focus of the following discussion will shift to three main methods that are most prominent and frequently discussed in the literature, namely blended learning, the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI), and gamification as an innovative means to enhance student motivation and engagement. These three methods not only demonstrate technological innovation in English language teaching but also reflect a shift in the learning mindset that is increasingly interactive, tailored to individual needs, and student-centered. Therefore, the next section will discuss each of these methods in more detail, starting with blended learning as the foundation of modern education.

Blended Learning

Blended learning has become one of the most dominant methods consistently appearing in various ELT articles over the past five years. Almost all analyzed sources—both academic journals and reports from institutions such as the British Council—mention blended learning as a strategic response to the challenges of modern education, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach combines the strengths of face-to-face and online learning in a single flexible and adaptive model.

According to Ramalingam, Yunus, and Hashim (2022), blended learning allows for a balanced integration of technology with traditional approaches, thereby creating a more personalized and student-centered learning experience. This is further reinforced by Vaishnav (2024), who states that blended learning has become a major trend in modern English Language Teaching (ELT), although it still faces challenges in the form of infrastructure gaps and teachers' readiness in digital literacy. As noted by Graham (2006), blended learning combines the best aspects of online and face-to-face instruction, thus significantly enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes.

In the future, blended learning is predicted to not only persist but also evolve, supported by advanced technologies such as sophisticated Learning Management Systems (LMS) and the integration of AI. In addition to offering flexibility, blended learning is also considered capable of enhancing the effectiveness of English language learning, provided it is accompanied by adequate training for teachers. Thus, blended learning is not merely a fleeting trend, but rather a component of the ongoing transformation in ELT teaching methods.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in ELT

Along with the increasing implementation of blended learning, another trend that has also garnered widespread attention in the past five years is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in English language learning. This topic has become one of the dominant discussions in various publications since 2022, indicating that AI is no longer just an accessory, but has become an integral part of modern learning strategies. According to a study by Crompton et al. (2023), the adoption of AI in English Language Teaching (ELT) has skyrocketed due to its ability to provide rapid and accurate feedback, as well as support adaptive independent learning.

AI-based tools such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, ELSA Speak, and QuillBot are widely utilized by both teachers and students. These tools assist in enhancing writing and speaking skills, particularly through automatic corrections, pronunciation practice, and more structured text development. Teachers are also beginning to use AI applications to support evaluation processes and enable more dynamic, project-based learning. Recent studies suggest that AI integration has contributed to the personalization of English language instruction, enabling real-time feedback and more learner-centered experiences, while still presenting challenges related to infrastructure readiness and digital literacy (e.g., Crompton et al., 2024; Huang & Spector, 2022).

Nevertheless, AI is seen as a crucial element in the development of personalized and flexible learning, particularly in higher education and academic courses. Its long-term implications include learning efficiency, mapping individual needs, and opportunities for lifelong learning. Therefore, the integration of AI in English Language Teaching (ELT) needs to be accompanied by teacher training, ethical regulations, and a critical approach to truly maximize its benefits.

Gamification in ELT

If artificial intelligence (AI) offers advanced automation and personalization, then the approach of gamification introduces an emotional and motivational dimension to learning English. Over the past five years, gamification has consistently appeared in various articles and educational platforms as an enjoyable yet effective method for enhancing student participation. By adopting game-like elements such as points, challenges, and levels, this method seeks to create a competitive yet friendly and engaging learning environment.

Platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Wordwall, and Duolingo are examples of popular tools that integrate gamification into the teaching and learning process. This approach is particularly suitable for online and hybrid learning, especially at the elementary and junior high school levels, as it helps maintain students' focus in an enjoyable atmosphere. A study by Huang & Spector (2022) indicates that 'Gamification enhances language engagement by increasing learners' intrinsic motivation and providing instant feedback loops.' However, adaptations are still necessary to ensure that the element of 'play' does not obscure the true learning objectives.

Going forward, the gamification trend is predicted to evolve towards integration with technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR), creating more immersive learning simulations. Some institutions are even beginning to design educational games based on interactive narratives and real-life roleplay that encourage the natural use of language. With well-developed content and the role of teachers as adaptive facilitators,

gamification is expected to remain an important element in technology-based innovations in English Language Teaching (ELT).

Findings

From the analysis conducted previously, there are three main trends in the development of English language teaching over the past five years. First, the learning process is moving towards more flexible and blended methods, such as blended learning, supported by research from Ramalingam et al. (2022) and Vaishnav (2024). Second, technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) is beginning to play a significant role in supporting the learning process, particularly in enhancing students' productive abilities, as demonstrated by research conducted by Crompton et al. (2023). Third, interactive and motivation-focused approaches, such as gamification, are increasingly being implemented as strategies to enhance student participation, as outlined in The Role of Gamification in ELT (2024). These three findings indicate that current ELT teaching is increasingly student-centered, oriented towards learning experiences, and in line with advancements in educational technology.

Discussion

The findings of this study are in line with various previous studies that highlight the direction of the development of ELT methods in recent years. For instance, Sukmalasari & Tarihoran (2025) identify that since the pandemic, learning approaches have become more adaptive and innovative, with increased use of technology and methods that prioritize flexibility. This supports the blended learning trend discussed in this article. The use of AI in English learning is also reinforced by Crompton et al. (2023), who found that AI-based tools such as ChatGPT and Grammarly can enrich the learning experience, particularly in enhancing writing skills. Meanwhile, gamification-based approaches are increasingly chosen to create an enjoyable learning atmosphere and increase student engagement, as stated in The Role of Gamification in ELT (2024).

In general, the learning of the English language is currently shifting towards a more student-centered model, incorporating aspects of technology, interactivity, and personalization. This indicates that the emerging trends are not merely a response to changes in the global situation (such as the pandemic), but also a reflection of the increasingly complex and diverse needs of learning.

Overall, the research findings indicate that in the past five years, the trend in English language learning methods has increasingly focused on approaches that rely on technology, are flexible, and student-centered. Blended learning, AI integration, and gamification have emerged as the three mostprominent strategies, supported by findings from various analyzed studies. This development reflects the education sector's efforts to continually adapt to the needs of the times and the characteristics of today's learners.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of six articles examining English language teaching trends from 2020 to 2025, it can be concluded that the approach in English Language Teaching (ELT) has

undergone a significant transformation. Three main findings from this study include the increaseduse of blended learning, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI), and the

implementation of gamification. These aspects not only reflect the adoption of technology in learning but also indicate a paradigm shift towards more flexible, interactive, and student-centered learning.

These developments also indicate that English Language Teaching (ELT) is no longer solely focused on the transfer of language knowledge, but is also prioritizing a holistic, adaptive, and relevant learning experience that meets the needs of the times. Innovations such as AI and gamification enhance the role of technology in fostering higher learning engagement, while blended learning expands access to broader and more inclusive education. These findings underscore the importance of openness to change and the strengthening of digital literacy in the realm of English education both now and in the future.

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