

TEACHING ENGLISH BEYOND THE TEXTBOOK: PEDAGOGY THAT CONNECTS

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Abstract. In Uzbekistan's evolving educational landscape, English language instruction is transitioning from traditional textbook methods to more interactive, learner-centered approaches. This article explores the limitations of conventional teaching and highlights innovative strategies such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and the Flipped Classroom model. By integrating these methods, educators can foster real-world communication skills and enhance student engagement.

Keywords: interactive pedagogy, English language teaching, Uzbekistan, task-based learning, CLIL, flipped classroom, student engagement, communicative competence, education reform, digital tools, learner-centered methods

In today's interconnected world, proficiency in English is more than an academic requirement; it's a gateway to global opportunities. In Uzbekistan, there's a growing recognition of the need to move beyond rote memorization and grammar drills. Educators are seeking methods that resonate with students' experiences and prepare them for real-life communication.

This article draws upon recent studies and educational reforms in Uzbekistan to examine effective English teaching methodologies.

The focus is on approaches that: Promote authentic language use; Enhance student motivation and autonomy; Support communicative competence; Adapt to diverse classroom settings.

Key methods discussed include:

- Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT): Emphasizes real-life tasks to develop language skills.
- Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): Combines subject matter learning with language instruction.

- Flipped Classroom Approach: Encourages students to engage with content outside class, freeing up classroom time for interactive activities.

The shift towards interactive pedagogy aligns with Uzbekistan's educational reforms aimed at modernizing teaching practices. While challenges like resource limitations and teacher training persist, the benefits of these methods are evident in increased student engagement and improved language skills. Embracing these approaches requires ongoing support and professional development for educators. This transition towards interactive pedagogy goes in tandem with the national education reform plans of Uzbekistan, particularly the 2020–2030 Education Development Concept that identifies innovation, inclusivity, and international quality instruction as areas of emphasis. Competency-oriented instruction and developing critical thinking skills in students take centre stage in such reforms and thus interactive instructional strategies are not merely useful but critical. But taking these new pedagogies to the classroom also has its challenges. The majority of schools, especially in rural schools, still lack up-to-date teaching materials, reliable internet connectivity, and digital tools that enable interactive learning. Additionally, most teachers do not have wide exposure to or training in new pedagogies such as CLIL, TBLT, and flipped classrooms. This often results in overreliance on old-fashioned, teacher-focused teaching. Despite these difficulties, pilot school and English Access Microscholarship program data from Uzbekistan show that students taught in interactive styles have higher levels of motivation, better pronunciation and fluency, and greater willingness to use English to communicate. Project work and group work activities also promote teamwork skills, creativity, and learner self-management – skills needed in the modern workplace.

Implementation of interactive pedagogical methods in English classes across Uzbekistan has yielded a number of measurable and observable benefits to the students, as well as the educators.

- Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT): TBLT classes have been noted to have increased student fluency, particularly in spontaneous speaking activities and group discussions. Students also engage more meaningfully with the language when anchored in real-life problem-solving situations. According to data from the Tashkent Medical Academy Repository (repository.tma.uz), students in TBLT-based classrooms had improved retention of words and demonstrated higher performance in practical language use examinations.

- Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): CLIL courses, especially in vocational schools and specialized lyceums, have allowed students to acquire subject matter expertise and English simultaneously.

In biology or geography, for instance, students not only learned jargon but also improved their reading skills and academic writing. Research evidence in the Asian Journal of Innovative Research and Development (ajird.journalspark.org) supports this dual benefit, noting that CLIL supports both increased cognitive engagement and contextual linguistic understanding.

- Flipped Classroom Approach: Experimental implementations of flipped classrooms—where students study lecture content at home and engage in active learning tasks in class—have resulted in increased student engagement and autonomy. Teachers observed that classroom time was now more effectively used for discussion, presentation, and peer feedback sessions. As indicated in British Council Uzbekistan case studies (britishcouncil.uz), students in this model were more confident and independent, especially in urban secondary schools where there was sufficient digital access. Furthermore, interactive approaches such as role-playing, project work, and the utilization of ICT tools (for example, Padlet, Quizlet, and Google Classroom) have also boosted pupil engagement. Pupils become owners of their learning, collaborate more within groups, and acquire life-like communication skills. In many classrooms, these methods have led to improved attendance rates and increased interest in English, particularly among pupils who were formerly disengaged.

Moving beyond textbooks to adopt interactive, student-centered teaching methods is essential for effective English language instruction in Uzbekistan. By embracing innovative pedagogies, educators can better prepare students for the demands of global communication and lifelong learning.

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