

English Language Teaching: Historical Overview, Current Issues and Suggestions for Enhancing Speaking Proficiency in EFL Contexts

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Abstract

The history of English Language Teaching (ELT) and learning in English as a Second and Foreign Language (ESL and EFL) contexts has gone through different practices. The role of memorization and repetition of English language structures has always been a dominant teaching attitude. This attitude has revealed unsuccessful results in promoting speaking proficiency among English language learners when communicating in real-world situations beyond the classroom context. Therefore, it is essential to address such practices and shed light on some of the issues that hinder English Language Learners (ELLs) from effectively using English in real-world communicative situations. This review paper focuses on ELT practices that have been unsuccessful in promoting English language learners' speaking proficiency. Additionally, it provides implications for classroom teaching instructions that integrate authentic tasks and materials. Implementing meaningful tasks that represent real-world situations could be a promising solution for enhancing ELLs' language competencies to enable them to transfer the language they learn to real-life situations beyond school settings. Some practical suggestions and recommendations are provided to enhance ELT in EFL contexts.

Keywords: *Authentic tasks and materials, communication skills, EFL, pronunciation, speaking proficiency*

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1. Introduction

Throughout the history of teaching English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL), instructors mainly required that learners learn the language through memorization and repetition of the second language (L2) structures without exposing them to real-life situations. These practices were unsuccessful in promoting English language learners' (ELLs) capacity when communicating in different life situations using the target language (TL). However, it is essential to incorporate new trends in ELT through integrating meaningful materials and authentic tasks that represent real-world situations and thus promote ELLs' competencies to transfer the language they are learning to situations beyond the classroom.

Research in the field of Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition has an essential role in constructing and modifying different approaches and methods for ELT for the purpose of guiding language learners to communicate effectively in the new language (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) mention three terms related to language teaching: Approach, method, and strategy. The term approach refers to fundamental philosophies and theories about the nature of language, the way it is learned and acquired, and how it is delivered. A teaching method is the practical application of an approach, which includes a set of strategies and techniques for delivering classroom instructions using different materials and activities. Teaching strategies are subsets of a method, which are formed by sequences of techniques (activities) that teachers use when designing their lesson plan to accomplish certain goals (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Wright, 2010).

Raising English language teachers' awareness of how these approaches and methods have evolved over history would facilitate their ability to make the best-informed teaching decisions. This paper provides an overview of ELT practices, approaches, methods, and strategies that have been used in ELT contexts. Furthermore, it suggests effective language-teaching practices; these integrate authentic tasks and materials to promote language learners' autonomy when they communicate in English more effectively and meaningfully, particularly in EFL contexts. Focus is on modern teaching practices that English language teachers should utilize to promote ELLs' speaking proficiency. Finally, this paper provides recommendations for effective teaching practices that could enhance language-learning capacities in the 21st Century.

2. The History of ELT Approaches, Methods and Materials

The history of ELT shows the development of different types of approaches and methods as a response to meet the demands of English language teaching and learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Throughout this history, the emergence and development of different theories in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition have influenced the types of methods used in ELT. That is, ELT has moved its practices from general theories related to the nature of languages and language learning to more specific theories that reinforce the importance of language that language learners receive. Consequently, modern ELT methods have replaced traditional and old-fashioned methods to resolve issues that hinder successful language learning and application. That is, old instructional methods that emphasized the role of translation and memorization of the L2 language rules and patterns failed to achieve the ultimate purpose, which is language communication. These have shifted to modern methods that promote students' capacities to communicate the language in real-life situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Wright, 2010).

ELT has experienced three phases of instructional approaches and methods: the traditional methods phase, the modern approach phase, and the post-method phase. The first phase was based on multiple instructional approaches and methods, which include the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method (also called the Natural Method), the Audio-Lingual Method, the Community Language Teaching Approach, and the Total Physical Response Approach (also called the Comprehension Approach). Each of these has emerged subsequently as a reaction to a previously unsuccessful method as well as a way to meet and fulfill particular demands regarding language teaching and learning (Celce-Murcia, 2014). The second phase brought a modern approach to meet current ELT demands and to help language learners communicate the classroom language they learn and effectively use it in real situations beyond the classroom settings. This approach is known as the Communicative Approach and has two versions in ELT: the weak version that teaches English through content subjects (known as Content-Based Language Teaching), and the strong version that teaches English through tasks (known as Task-Based Language Teaching) (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

The third phase is known as the post-method era, which was developed as a criticism to the notion of methods that some are superior to others. Building on such a consensus, Prabhu (1990) explains that the answer to the question, “Why is there is no best method” has three possible answers: different teaching and learning settings require different methods; some validity and truth do exist in all methods, and there is no good or bad method (as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2014, 10). However, it has been argued that the best classroom instructions should be designed based on a “well-established” language teaching and learning principles (Celce-Murcia, 2014, p. 10). Such principles were proposed by Kumaravadivelu (1994) and are summarized as following: “Maximize learning opportunity, facilitate negotiated interaction, minimize perceptual mismatches, activate intuitive heuristics, foster language awareness, contextualize linguistic input, integrate language skills, promote learner autonomy, raise cultural consciousness, ensure social relevance” (Celce-Murcia, 2014, pp. 10, 11). Implementation of these principles are essential in today’s classroom instruction and practices and should receive attention from English language teachers, especially in EFL contexts where TL interaction outside the classroom is very limited.

3. Current ELT Issues in EFL Contexts

English language teachers around the world, particularly in EFL contexts, are still in favor of using traditional teaching practices that make language learners analyze, memorize, and translate structures and chunks of the English language rather than allowing them to learn the language for the purpose of communication (Celce-Murcia, 2014). Such practices greatly emphasize the role of memorization of vocabulary items and language forms in abstract and passive manners instead of integrating them into meaningful tasks. In such contexts, teachers rely solely on language-related materials (textbooks) that actually should only be used as references for printed language exposure to facilitate language instructions and learning. Such textbooks, alone, have never been enough to guide ELLs to effectively acquire and authentically apply the language they learn in the classroom to real-world communicative situations. Moreover, those teachers put more emphasis on classroom instruction that focuses on memorization of vocabulary items and grammatical rules and structures of the TL, but they do not emphasize instruction that teaches how to use and connect these language forms with their actual meaning and when to apply them successfully in real-life situations.

Consequently, such practices have not succeeded in meeting the demands that ELLs should be able to communicate in the TL in situations beyond the classroom context. Furthermore, such ELT practices result in passive language learners who at least have mastered the linguistic rules through memorization but still lack other essential language-related competencies including communicative, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competencies (Duff, 2014).

Because the ultimate goal of language learning is communication, not memorization, language teaching should aim to meet this goal. Consequently, great emphasis should be given, not exclusively to abstract linguistic structures, but also to a variety of tangible linguistic content that is carried out through use of meaningful methods and materials to make language learning more useful and applicable in current real-life communicative situations. Additionally, teachers should use a variety of contextualized language input—the language that is carried out through content and meaningful situations—inside the classroom to give their students a better chance to internalize and use a variety of language structures. That is, teachers should present the language through meaningful (authentic) materials and hands-on classroom activities (tasks). Additionally, the different language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) should not be dealt with in isolation, but should be integrated during the classroom instruction and activities (Celce-Murcia, 2014). Instructors should consider these principles when teaching L2 learners in order to promote not only their speaking proficiency, but also their proficiency in all language skills.

Another essential issue to mention is classroom language exposure. Focusing merely on the language textbook is not enough in promoting oral communicative skills. Thus, teachers should expose their students to meaningful language patterns used in everyday life by native speakers through audio and audiovisual materials followed by practical activities and tasks to reinforce the language being used. For example, when teachers aim to teach their students how to make a shopping list or place an order from a restaurant, they should represent the actual situation through authentic and concrete materials and have the students practice the targeted language forms within such tasks.

4. Integrating Authentic-Based Materials and Tasks

The idea of using authentic-based materials and tasks is to represent real-world situations. Such materials and tasks should represent realistic and current (local and global) issues, examples of such issues might be found in corpora (mainly spoken corpora) of the TL (see McCarthy & Carter, 2006). It is essential to present real-world and current issues that reflect our current, everyday life, such as social, health, political, economic, and environmental issues. These are examples of local and global themes that L2 learners need to add to their language learning capacity. Students should be the center of language learning where the teacher's responsibility is to create interactive tasks and the students' role is to initiate relevant discussions about these issues. Such tasks should be incorporated with authentic materials (See Appendix A for a list of online resources) for better language exposure to develop students' awareness when applying the language they gain to such interactive tasks. Using tasks that focus only on limited issues related to students' social and cultural norms might limit their language capacity when they need to communicate globally. Consequently, a variety of tasks incorporating different local and global issues help to fulfill the demands and expectations that students need in order to survive in this increasingly interconnected world.

Engaging students to work collaboratively, for example, in problem-solving tasks of current global issues, creates an active learning environment and contributes in promoting their critical and creative thinking skills. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), it is important to design such tasks in a way that provides practice of unrehearsed language patterns in order to foster their autonomy in delivering creative and new language patterns during classroom interactions and beyond.

The term “real-world tasks” was defined as “the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play and in between” (Nunan, 2014, p. 458). For example, students should learn how to make a reservation at a hotel, negotiate how to arrange a meeting or plan a weekend activity, invite friends to a party, meet someone for the first time, have an appointment/visit with a doctor, and so forth. This list could go on; however, teachers need to consider which tasks to use with students at what times.

An important aim of using of authentic tasks and materials is to motivate students to learn the language. Therefore, teachers should discuss with their students the tasks that meet their interests. Just as important, such tasks should be adapted to meet students’ age and proficiency levels. By having these properties in mind, such tasks and materials will stimulate students to use a variety of communication and linguistic skills. In addition, students will use their ability to connect knowledge of these skills to language functions and meaning, which further contributes in promoting their communicative competence (Nunan, 2014).

5. Types of Authentic Tasks

Nunan (2014) mentions two types of tasks: Targeted tasks (the use of language in real-world situations like household chores) and pedagogical tasks (tasks that teachers design for students to do in the classroom to acquire language). Both types of tasks have different meanings, but they are still connected to each other and are essential in classroom planning and arrangement (Nunan, 2014). Teachers might integrate both types of tasks into a one-fixed task that includes an example of a real-world issue and the targeted forms of the language. For example, teachers might teach the use of past tense forms through story-telling or the use of present tense forms through talking about daily routines in their lives.

5.1 Classroom Applications of Authentic Tasks and Materials

Classroom instruction and knowledge of language learning processes should apply some features to achieve the goals of authentic tasks and materials. First, the role of teachers is to share with their students the expectations that they need to meet. Teachers need to work as facilitators of learning, not only deliverers of content, and their function is to provide students with feedback that is preferably immediate while they are communicating during classroom tasks. Teachers might engage in classroom communications by establishing a situation or further prompts that are likely to keep communications constant. Second, students need to acquire communication skills—those that they need to know when interacting in a given task, for example, “stating opinions, agreeing or disagreeing, interrupting and clarifying” (Lazaraton, 2014, p. 112). Third, based on the nature of the tasks, students may work individually (for example, to present an issue), in pairs or in groups (for example, to exchange meanings). Finally, tasks should have three main characteristics in order

to facilitate development of communicative skills: Information gap, choice, and feedback (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

5.2 Information Gap

Information gap is one of the main features that a learning task should incorporate to make communication more effective and meaningful. Students are motivated to fill such a gap by using the language in a collaborative situation (Ellis, 2003). The idea is to have students work in pairs, or small groups, on a task where each one has information that is different from that of his partner so they can both have an opportunity to exchange meaning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). For example, two students may do some oral communication to arrange a meeting with two of their friends during the weekend (see Figure 1). Each one has a schedule, which is divided into multiple slots. Each one has some of these slots containing information regarding what his friends are doing during the weekend; the other slots are left blank. The role of each student is to ask the others questions or give appropriate prompts so they can exchange information to fill in all the missing gaps until they decide which day at what time they can meet and who can or cannot join the meeting (Nunan, 2014). The goal of such an activity is to promote students' awareness in using appropriate language to negotiate plans in the future.

| Student A Worksheet | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| | Friday evening | Saturday evening | Sunday evening |
| Student 1 | late work | ..... | family meeting |
| Student 2 | ..... | free | ..... |
| | Friday evening | Saturday evening | Sunday evening |
| Students 1 | ..... | have a meeting | ..... |
| Students 2 | doing house | ..... | free |

Figure 1 Information Gap Task: Meeting Arrangement (adapted from Nunan, 2014)

This activity might be modified in a particular way that meets students' proficiency level; for example, providing students with oral prompts instead of written, especially for beginner language learners. In addition, teachers might manipulate the task function in a way where students can use a particular language structure to negotiate meaning, for example, present or past activities. This will give students an opportunity to apply linguistic skills with communication skills in authentic situations to promote their communicative proficiency and accuracy.

5.3 *Choice*

The second feature that classroom tasks should have in order to facilitate development of real-life communication ability is giving the students the opportunity and freedom to choose what they want to say and how to say it. Otherwise, if students are provided with controlled tasks that limit them to conveying meaning in one way, the interaction is thus neither communicative, nor authentic. So, in order for real communication to occur, students should be given the chance to choose whatever possible structure and meaning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

5.4 *Feedback*

The third necessary feature of tasks is to encourage interlocutors to provide feedback to each other during classroom communication activities. Real communication has a purpose in which an interlocutor should be able to use the message s/he receives from the listener to decide whether his/her message has been successfully received (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Receiving incomprehensible input from either of the interlocutors, however, prevents the communication from continuing, unless students negotiate meaning by employing strategies such as clarifying, asking questions, using synonyms or drawing, etc. Therefore, arranging for classroom conversations among students is a good activity in promoting their communication skills. Teachers might assign their students any controversial issue and ask each two students to prepare at home by reading about the issue. The next day, each pair of students stand in front of their classmates to carry on a conversation about the issue where each one should have a position that disputes the other.

Teachers might also encourage their students to do classroom presentations to promote their self-confidence in using the language. Such presentations might be assigned as individually prepared work or as group-based work, depending on the number of the students. Students, with their teacher's assistance, can choose their topic based on their interest. Classroom presentations usually, especially with young learners, improve students' self-confidence when using the language in front of an audience. Teachers will have the opportunity to assess their students' progress and provide feedback instantly. They may video-record their students' presentations, so they can refer back to them when targeting a particular language feature or communication skill. One possible textbook reference of presentation tasks is one of the Present Yourself book series by Gershon (2008) as they involve a variety of topics targeted for students at earlier stages of language development (Lazaraton, 2014).

6. **Focus on Language Forms, Functions, and Meaning**

Language forms and their functions are essential for conveying accurate meaning during classroom communication (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011) and beyond. Leading students toward achieving such competence requires teachers to differentiate tasks in a way that prompts students to use a variety of forms while communicating meaning. For example, when doing an information-gap task, students would most appropriately communicate the meaning using future forms. Hence, students' knowledge of forms, meanings, and functions as well as social issues is an essential aspect to successful communication.

The idea of classroom communication has been interpreted as having two sets: the strong interpretation and the weak interpretation. Advocates of the strong interpretation believe that

“communicative engagement in tasks provides the necessary and sufficient condition for SLA” (Nunan, 2014, p. 460). In contrast, advocates of the weak interpretation believe that “a systematic focus on language system is also healthy for language acquisition” (Nunan, 2014, p. 460). However, more emphasis should be given to language functions over forms using a functional syllabus. A functional syllabus includes general topics that aim to elicit particular use of speech practices, for example, greeting, inviting, meeting, and complaining that are presented within a social context (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). A good resource that teachers might use is Grammar Practice Activities (Ur, 2009), which provides fruitful exercises and tasks that address both communications and functions.

When teaching a particular language form and its function, instructors will be more helpful to low-proficiency students by starting with simple and meaningful language examples. However, high-proficiency level students might learn language forms and their functions through more complex language examples. For example, a teacher might teach his low-proficiency level students that some verbs require an –s ending when talking about a third-person. A good activity in this case is to use interactive tasks that require students to practice asking and answering questions that describe a family member’s daily routines on a given weekday. In this activity, the teacher first gives an example of his/her own daily routines while focusing the attention to the form s/he used when talking about him/herself. Then, make another example by describing someone of his/her family member’s daily routine while students’ attention is directed to the new form being used. To do such an activity, the teacher should bring a chart that includes pictures of different daily-life activities to show students the possible vocabulary items needed to achieve the task. Then, each student receives a card (see Figure 2) to fill in with activities of their family members’ daily routine, on Saturday as an example. After that, the teacher divides students into pairs to do the task. Finally, each one will ask a question and the other will give an answer using the information on the card. For example:

Student 1 might say: What does your brother do on Saturday night?

Student 2 may reply: He meets his friends.

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| What does (<i>someone</i>) do on Saturday (<i>specific time</i>)? | |
| Specific Time | Daily routine activity |
| Morning | ..... |
| Afternoon | ..... |
| Evening | ..... |
| Night | ..... |

Figure 2 Interaction Task: Daily Routine Activities (adapted from Ur, 2009)

A modification of the previous task allows students to practice a variety of complex language forms and their functions. For example, teachers might design tasks that help students to

learn how, when, and in what situations to modify action verbs. This could be applied by creating a variety of targeted situations where students practice asking each others, for example, about actions that take place at the time of speaking (adding –ing to an action verb) or about situations that took place in the past (adding –ed to an action verb). Doing so promotes students' awareness of 1) communicating meaning and 2) mastering a variety of language forms and their functions (linguistic competence) simultaneously and authentically.

Another activity to promote students communicative, linguistic, and sociocultural competence is to have students do role-plays. Lazaraton (2014) mentions an excellent reference, *Speaking Naturally* (see Tillitt & Bruder, 1985) that includes a variety of role-play activities to promote students' demonstrations of sociocultural speech acts. Teachers might ask their students to perform a role-play activity, for example, by training them how to place an order at a restaurant, make a flight reservation, communicate with a doctor about their health problems, and so forth. That is, a student role is to be the service representative and the other's role is to be the customer or client. These activities are authentic in that they reflect tasks that students actually need when using the language in similar situations beyond the classroom. In addition, these activities promote students' awareness of using the language interactively (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

Natural spoken language (the language spoken by native speakers) should be taught with particular classroom instruction and activities different from those used when teaching other skills like reading and writing. The reason is because the structure of spoken language is different from the structure of printed language. . For example, some features of the spoken language are constructions of chunks and phrases that are joined with simple linking words like (and and but) (Lazaraton, 2014). Therefore, it is essential to expose language learners to and promote their awareness of a variety of structures of spoken language (Lazaraton, 2014).

Additionally, compared to the written structures of the English language, spoken English is not considered grammatical or appropriate (that is, if it were written). A few examples of English spoken language include: I'm gonna or I hadda go instead of saying I am going to or I had to go, and trimmed forms like uni for university. Additionally, English spoken language uses "hesitation markers like (um, uh, sorta, y'know, well, and like) and discourse markers (like cuz and oh) that are ubiquitous" and are not used in writing, "nor do they show up in many scripted dialogues presented in ESL/EFL teaching materials" (Lazaraton, 2014, p. 108). Because of these characteristics, language teachers should address these variations when designing speaking activities.

7. Promoting English Speaking Skill in EFL Contexts

The skill of speaking is an important part in language learning, but it has been underestimated in EFL contexts. Classroom instruction has focused on having students listen to and repeat conversations written in language textbooks (Kayi, 2012). In contrast, teaching the L2 speaking skill should aim to promote ELLs' communicative skills and their ability to interact in a variety of topics. Doing so requires the ELT to achieve six objectives when teaching English language speaking. First, ELLs should be able to produce speech sounds and patterns effectively and accurately. Second, ELLs must be able to use word stress and sentence intonation and rhythm effectively. Third, they need to identify proper vocabulary, phrases, and sentences that meet

particular demands, including social contexts, audience, and content. Fourth, they should be able to arrange and organize their ideas meaningfully and logically. Fifth, they should be able to show that they can use the language they are learning as a tool to express beliefs and decisions. Finally, they should be able to demonstrate fluency and confidence when using the language in natural situations (Kayi, 2012).

Besides the aforementioned speaking objectives, research has shown four main factors that contribute to the development of EFL speaking competence: Fluency, accuracy, appropriacy, and authenticity (Lazaraton, 2014). In terms of fluency and accuracy, Edge and Garton defined both terms by referring to accuracy as “conforming to the language system,” whereas fluency is “operating the [language] system quickly” (as cited in Lazaraton, 2014, p. 107). Lazaraton (2014) further discussed that the extent to which teachers should focus on accuracy or fluency depends on the context in which students are learning English (whether it is an ESL or EFL). Students who learn English in an ESL context have the privilege of a variety of language exposure resources outside the classroom where they can do more practice to increase their language fluency. In this case, classroom activities should be dedicated to language accuracy. Conversely, students learning the language in an EFL context should receive language instruction that is devoted to fluency and focused on meaning (Lazaraton, 2014). Furthermore, according to Mumford (2008), knowledge of spoken grammar of English can improve students’ speech fluency and appropriacy (Lazaraton, 2014). Therefore, it is essential to include forms of English spoken grammar when designing tasks and activities for teaching listening and speaking. Lazaraton (2014) mentions some examples of textbooks that include a variety of English spoken grammar that are found in the Touchstone series (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2005; 2006).

Another consideration is the appropriacy factor, which represents, to a great extent, the sociocultural context or pragmatics of the TL (Lazaraton, 2014). Social and cultural competencies are two important aspects that ELLs should achieve beside accuracy and fluency. According to Lazaraton (2014), learners of other languages should be able to understand several etiquettes during communications like directness, politeness, and formality and other features like “what not to say at all and what to communicate nonverbally” (p. 107). Therefore, students should receive explicit instruction in interpreting and practicing different (formal and informal) speech acts of the target language. Teachers might find such forms of speech acts in movies and radio broadcasts.

In terms of pedagogical materials, Lazaraton (2014) mentions that authenticity may not have as much benefit for L2 adults who already have received exposure to real situations in the target language culture. However, pedagogical materials that incorporate authenticity then might work best for teaching ELLs in countries where students have limited or no direct exposure to the target language. Teachers, therefore, consider these four should bear in mind that spoken language should not be dealt with in terms of written language norms and use a great deal of the spoken grammar of English when teaching spoken language. It is best to teach those grammar aspects explicitly. Pronunciation, as another important aspect of speaking proficiency, seems to be neglected during classroom language instructions.

8. Teaching Pronunciation through Authentic Materials

ELLs who have already developed a rigid awareness of their L1 sound system, especially adults, need more focus and practice with the speech-sound system and sound patterns of the English language. The reason is that sometimes there are differences between the speech-sound system and sound patterns of the L1 and the L2. Such differences might result in pronunciation interference with some patterns of the speech-sound system in English language due to variations of such patterns between the two languages (Smith, 2001). Furthermore, because good quality in pronunciation always aids good quality in speaking and meaning transmission, teachers should integrate pronunciation activities during their classroom instructions. This is to allow students to practice the sound system of the English language and to bridge the gap between students' L1 and the L2 sound variations.

Some teachers overlook the importance of pronunciation in many classroom contexts and focus on other skills like memorization of language rules and vocabulary items (Celaya, 2012). Thus, it is extremely important to emphasize pronunciation when designing focused tasks in order to promote students' L2 pronunciation skills and reduce their heavy accent affected by a long term shaping of their L1 accent. Heavy L2 accents might negatively influence language communication.

Exposing students, of any age group, to comprehensible authentic language that is produced by native speakers of the target language may increase students' awareness of how particular language chunks and phrases are pronounced. Sometimes nonnative English teachers neglect teaching pronunciation due to their lack of confidence to exemplify authentic pronunciation of the target language. In such situations it would be ideal to use samples of authentic language produced by native speakers of the target language, which might be accessible through a variety of resources, for example, YouTube videos, TV programs, radio broadcasts, and so forth. Technology innovations have brought a variety of facilitative features in controlling many of these visual displays. For instance, teachers and their students have may use the option of displaying subtitles of the spoken language in video clips. This feature allows language learners to see while listening to the language at the same time. They also have an option to pause and replay any portion of the video clip, as well as another option to increase or decrease the speed level of the spoken language. All these options provide opportunities to practice with a variety of models.

Another effective technique, especially when teaching low-proficiency students, is to show them how and where a particular sound is produced. For example, teachers can bring a chart that illustrates the speech organs and teach their students explicitly the manners and places of articulation for consonants and vowels and how they are uttered as individual sounds and when found in words and sentences. Later, teachers may use another activity named record, play, and match as an activity to teach pronunciation through authentic materials. Teachers might assign to their students different samples of short video clips by native speakers on any issue (a weather broadcast, for example) to work on at home. Then, students are required to listen to a portion of the clip and record (using a smart phone or any recording device) themselves repeating that portion. Next, students can play their recording and compare it with the original portion. They can drill themselves on this task at home until they achieve a target-like pronunciation patterns.

8. Conclusion

This paper reviewed the history of and current issues in ELT practices. In addition, it has reviewed some classroom activities, and practical solutions for effective ELT in the EFL context using an approach that implements authentic-based tasks and materials in order to promote ELLs' speaking proficiency. In a best-case scenario, English language teachers will consider such practices in order to promote their students' English language speaking proficiency. Ultimately, teachers should understand that L2 speaking skills should be developed to meet particular demands that are related to language learners and that go beyond the classroom context, so L2 learners can effectively apply classroom learning to real-life situations. Such implications require language teachers to focus on appropriate materials that really reflect the naturally-spoken language of native speakers of the L2 in real-life situations. EFL teachers in different contexts around the world can greatly promote their students' speaking proficiency by implementing these practices and activities—and meet the demands of our time.

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Appendix A Selected Websites for Classroom Authentic Materials

| Title or Description | Website |
|---|--|
| With this flourishing online community, teachers may view, share, and learn varied techniques to improve students' learning. | www.teachingchannel.org |
| This website includes a variety of authentic language presented in real-world videos. | www.FluentU.com |
| Here, you are exposed to a vast number of strategies and activities that help you to develop K-12 instruction. | www.edutopia.org |
| This is a wonderful online platform specifically for English language teachers to find materials across language skills. | www.busyteacher.org |
| <u>FLTeach Foreign Language Teaching Forum is an international forum on which teachers from all around the world post questions, responses, and findings.</u> | www.cortland.edu/flteach/ |
| <u>American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages is the site for the US national organization for professional development, publications, resources, etc.</u> | www.actfl.org |
| <u>StarTalk provides materials for teacher development, use of authentic materials, and assessment.</u> | www.larcstartalk.wikispaces.com/STARTALK www.startalk.umd.edu/materials/ |
| The Annenberg Foundation provides access to teacher development materials such as <i>Teaching Foreign Languages K-12: A Library of Practices</i> and <i>A Workshop for Teachers</i> . | www.learner.org |
| TESOL International Association reports recent research findings, professional development events, publications, and other resources. | www.tesol.org |
| Ohio Department of Education World Languages site has numerous samples of authentic materials and assessment for all grades, including units featuring Integrated Performance Assessment. | www.education.ohio.gov/ |