

The comprehensive approach to english teacher education:

From linguistics to curriculum design

phonology

morphology

syntax

semantics

discourse

pragmatics

sociolinguistics



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The comprehensive approach to english teacher education:

From linguistics to curriculum design

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PREFACE

English teacher education in the twenty-first century demands a broader, deeper, and more articulated understanding of what it means to teach a foreign language. The preparation of English teachers can no longer be reduced to linguistic proficiency, methodological familiarity, or the mechanical application of classroom techniques. Contemporary higher education requires professionals capable of understanding language as structure, meaning, discourse, culture, identity, technology, curriculum, and social practice. This book emerges from that conviction: the formation of English teachers must be integral, reflective, contextualized, and academically coherent.

The central purpose of this work is to offer a comprehensive view of English teacher education from three interconnected dimensions: linguistic foundations, TEFL strategies, and curriculum design. These dimensions are frequently studied separately, yet in real educational practice they operate together. A teacher cannot design effective learning experiences without understanding how language works. A methodology cannot be pedagogically meaningful if it is disconnected from learners' linguistic, academic, cultural, and professional needs. A curriculum cannot be coherent if it does not articulate learning outcomes, teaching strategies, assessment evidence, and continuous improvement. For this reason, the book proposes an integrated approach in which linguistic knowledge, classroom practice, and curricular organization are understood as mutually dependent elements of teacher formation.

The first chapter, *Linguistic Foundations in Higher Education*, establishes the conceptual basis for English teacher education. It argues that future teachers require more than communicative ability; they need analytical knowledge of phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse, and sociolinguistics. These areas are not presented as abstract theoretical fields, but as professional tools that allow teachers to interpret learner errors, explain language phenomena, design meaningful instruction, and support academic communication. The chapter emphasizes that linguistics becomes pedagogically relevant when it informs decision-making in the classroom, assessment, curriculum planning, and learner support.

The second chapter, *Strategies and Practices for Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, moves from linguistic foundations to pedagogical action. It examines contemporary methodological principles, the integration of receptive and productive skills, the use of

technologies and interactive resources, and competency-based assessment. This chapter recognizes that English teaching in higher education must respond to adult learners, digital environments, communicative demands, academic literacy, and professional development. It also insists that methodology should not be understood as a rigid recipe, but as a reflective and situated practice. Task-based learning, project-based learning, communicative approaches, blended learning, gamification, formative assessment, and digital tools become valuable only when they are aligned with objectives, learner needs, feedback, and evidence of learning.

The third chapter, Curriculum Design as an Axis of Academic Articulation, completes the formative sequence by showing that linguistic foundations and TEFL practices must be organized through coherent curriculum design. This chapter places curriculum at the center of academic articulation. It explains that a curriculum is not merely a list of courses or an institutional document, but a living structure that connects graduate profiles, learning outcomes, syllabi, didactic units, assessment systems, quality assurance, stakeholder needs, and continuous improvement. The chapter highlights the importance of constructive alignment, macro- and micro-planning, curriculum mapping, evidence-based review, and inclusive updating processes. Through this perspective, curriculum design becomes the mechanism that sustains the quality and relevance of English teacher education.

The book has been conceived for readers who understand teaching as an intellectual, ethical, and professional act. It is addressed to teacher educators, English language instructors, curriculum designers, academic coordinators, researchers, postgraduate students, and institutions committed to improving the preparation of English teachers. Its contribution lies not only in presenting theoretical perspectives, but in articulating them with practical and curricular implications. Throughout the chapters, the discussion maintains a scientific-humanized style because language education is both an academic field and a deeply human process. Teaching English involves structures and systems, but also emotions, identities, aspirations, cultural encounters, social possibilities, and institutional responsibilities.

One of the main assumptions of this work is that English teacher education must be responsive to change. Higher education is being transformed by internationalization, artificial intelligence, digital platforms, multilingual classrooms, competency-based

models, accreditation demands, and new professional expectations. These transformations require teachers who can adapt without losing academic rigor, innovate without abandoning pedagogical purpose, and use technology without replacing human mediation. The English teacher of the present and future must be capable of designing learning environments where language becomes a tool for communication, knowledge construction, inclusion, professional growth, and intercultural understanding.

Another fundamental assumption is that quality in English teacher education depends on coherence. Coherence means that what institutions declare in their graduate profiles must be reflected in courses, activities, resources, assessment tasks, and evidence of achievement. It means that methodologies must correspond to learning outcomes. It means that assessment must support improvement rather than merely certify performance. It means that curriculum updating must be based on evidence, not only tradition or administrative compliance. Coherence is the principle that allows the educational project to move from intention to action.

This book also defends the idea that English teachers are not mere implementers of methods or transmitters of content. They are reflective professionals, applied linguists in practice, designers of learning experiences, mediators of communication, evaluators of competencies, users of technology, and participants in curriculum development. Their work requires knowledge, sensitivity, creativity, ethical responsibility, and institutional support. Therefore, teacher education must prepare them not only to teach English, but to understand why, how, for whom, and under what curricular purposes English should be taught.

The pages that follow invite the reader to consider English teacher education as an integrated academic project. Linguistics provides the foundation; TEFL strategies provide the pedagogical action; curriculum design provides the structure that gives coherence and continuity. Together, these three dimensions form the basis of an integral approach to the preparation of English teachers. This is the spirit of the book: to contribute to a more rigorous, reflective, inclusive, and professionally relevant understanding of English teacher education in higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of English teachers in higher education has become an academic, pedagogical, linguistic, and curricular challenge of increasing relevance. In contemporary educational systems, English is no longer understood only as a foreign language subject or as an additional communicative skill. It is a language of academic participation, professional mobility, intercultural exchange, digital interaction, scientific production, and institutional internationalization. For this reason, the preparation of future English teachers requires an integral approach that articulates linguistic knowledge, methodological practice, technological mediation, competency-based assessment, and curriculum design. This book is built upon that premise: English teacher education must be conceived as a coherent formative process in which theory, practice, and curriculum are not separate dimensions, but mutually dependent components of the same academic project.

The central concern of this work is the need to overcome fragmented models of English teacher preparation. In many educational contexts, linguistic foundations are taught as theoretical content, teaching strategies are presented as methodological techniques, and curriculum design is treated as an administrative requirement. This separation weakens professional formation because it prevents future teachers from understanding how language knowledge informs pedagogy, how methodology depends on learner needs and learning outcomes, and how curriculum gives coherence to institutional teaching practices. An English teacher cannot teach pronunciation effectively without understanding phonological structures; cannot guide academic writing without syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and discourse awareness; cannot use technology meaningfully without pedagogical purpose; cannot assess competence without clear criteria; and cannot design learning experiences without curricular alignment.

From this perspective, the book proposes an integral approach to English teacher education, moving from linguistic foundations to TEFL strategies and then toward curriculum design. This sequence is intentional. The first dimension, linguistic formation, provides the conceptual basis for understanding English as a system of sounds, structures, meanings, uses, discourses, and social practices. The second dimension, teaching practice, translates that linguistic knowledge into strategies for managing receptive and productive skills, using technologies, promoting interaction, and evaluating learning through

competencies. The third dimension, curriculum design, organizes both foundations and practices into a coherent academic structure that connects graduate profiles, learning outcomes, syllabi, didactic units, assessment evidence, and continuous improvement.

The first chapter, *Linguistic Foundations in Higher Education*, examines the role of linguistics in the formation of English teachers. It argues that future teachers require more than the ability to communicate in English; they need to understand how the language functions internally and socially. Phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics are presented as essential areas for interpreting learner difficulties, explaining language phenomena, designing meaningful instruction, and supporting academic communication. The chapter emphasizes that linguistic knowledge becomes professionally relevant when it helps teachers make informed decisions about teaching, feedback, assessment, and curriculum.

The second chapter, *Strategies and Practices for Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, focuses on the pedagogical transformation of linguistic knowledge. It analyzes contemporary methodological principles for higher education, including communicative, task-based, project-based, post-method, collaborative, and learner-centered approaches. It also examines the integrated management of listening, reading, speaking, and writing in adult learners, recognizing that language skills do not develop in isolation but through meaningful input, interaction, production, feedback, and reflection. In addition, the chapter addresses the role of technologies and interactive resources in TEFL practice, emphasizing that digital tools only become pedagogically valuable when they are aligned with learning objectives, learner needs, and assessment criteria. The chapter closes with competency-based assessment as a process that supports learning, self-regulation, collaboration, academic literacy, and communicative performance.

The third chapter, *Curriculum Design as an Axis of Academic Articulation*, places curriculum at the center of institutional coherence. It argues that the quality of English teacher education depends not only on what is taught or how it is taught, but also on how the entire formative process is designed, aligned, implemented, evaluated, and improved. Curriculum design is understood as the academic structure that connects institutional purposes with classroom practice. For this reason, the chapter examines principles of curriculum design applied to English teaching, macro- and micro-planning from syllabus to didactic unit, alignment between learning outcomes and graduate profiles, and models

of continuous improvement for curriculum updating. This chapter completes the logic of the book by showing that linguistic foundations and TEFL strategies require curricular organization to become sustainable within higher education programs.

The book also assumes that English teacher education must respond to the transformations of the twenty-first century. Digital platforms, artificial intelligence, online learning, multilingual classrooms, internationalization, employability, inclusive education, and competency-based models have changed the conditions under which English is learned and taught. These changes require teachers who are not only users of English, but reflective professionals capable of designing learning environments, mediating communication, adapting strategies, evaluating competencies, using technologies ethically, and participating in curriculum improvement. In this sense, the English teacher is understood as an applied linguist in practice, a pedagogical designer, a curriculum actor, and an educational mediator.

Another essential premise of this work is that English teacher education must be human-centered. Although the book discusses linguistic systems, methodological models, curriculum structures, assessment evidence, and institutional quality, its final concern is the learner and the teacher as human subjects. Language learning involves cognition, emotion, identity, culture, motivation, anxiety, autonomy, interaction, and social participation. Therefore, English teaching cannot be reduced to technical procedures. It must be understood as a formative act that creates opportunities for communication, inclusion, academic growth, professional development, and intercultural understanding.

The work is directed to teacher educators, English language instructors, curriculum designers, academic coordinators, postgraduate students, researchers, and institutions interested in strengthening English teacher education. Its contribution lies in offering an articulated framework that connects what teachers need to know about language, what they need to do in the classroom, and how those practices should be organized within a coherent curriculum. The book does not propose a single method or a closed model. Instead, it offers a comprehensive perspective that allows each educational context to interpret, adapt, and apply its principles according to its own institutional realities and learner needs.

The title, *The Integral Approach in English Teacher Education: From Linguistics to Curriculum Design*, expresses the conceptual route of the book. The movement from

linguistics to curriculum design is not a movement from theory to administration, but from understanding language to organizing the conditions for its teaching and learning. Linguistics provides depth, TEFL strategies provide pedagogical action, and curriculum design provides coherence. Together, these three dimensions form the basis for a more rigorous, reflective, inclusive, and professionally relevant model of English teacher education in higher education.

CHAPTER I

LINGUISTIC
FOUNDATIONS IN
HIGHER
EDUCATION

CHAPTER I: LINGUISTIC FOUNDATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

I. INTRODUCTION

English teacher education in higher education requires a comprehensive understanding of language as a complex, dynamic, and socially situated phenomenon. To prepare future English teachers effectively, it is not sufficient to develop only communicative fluency or practical classroom techniques. Teacher education must also provide a solid linguistic foundation that allows prospective educators to understand how English operates as a system of sounds, structures, meanings, uses, and discourses. In this sense, linguistics becomes a core component of professional teacher preparation because it offers the conceptual tools needed to analyze language, explain learning difficulties, design pedagogical interventions, and interpret learners' communicative performance.

The formation of English teachers cannot be reduced to the instrumental mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Although these components are essential, they represent only part of the broader linguistic knowledge required for teaching. English teachers must understand how phonological patterns affect listening comprehension and oral intelligibility; how syntactic structures shape grammatical accuracy and academic writing; how semantic relations influence vocabulary development and meaning construction; how pragmatic competence allows learners to communicate appropriately across social and cultural contexts; and how academic discourse organizes knowledge in higher education. Therefore, linguistic knowledge should not be treated as an abstract or isolated field, but as a practical and reflective foundation for informed teaching.

From this perspective, linguistics contributes directly to the professional identity of English teachers. A teacher who understands language scientifically is better prepared to identify why learners produce certain errors, why specific structures become difficult to acquire, why pronunciation problems persist, why learners misunderstand implied meanings, and why academic writing demands more than grammatical correctness. Linguistic knowledge allows teachers to move beyond correction as a mechanical act and toward explanation, guidance, mediation, and pedagogical decision-making. This is especially relevant in higher education, where English teaching is often connected to academic literacy, professional communication, internationalization, research production, and disciplinary discourse.

The importance of linguistic foundations becomes even more evident in English as a Foreign Language contexts, where learners usually have limited exposure to authentic English interaction outside the classroom. In such settings, the teacher becomes a key mediator between the linguistic system and the learner's communicative development. The teacher must create learning opportunities that compensate for the limited natural exposure to the language, while also helping learners develop awareness of form, meaning, use, and context. This requires the teacher to possess not only methodological knowledge, but also a deep understanding of how language works and how it is acquired.

Applied linguistics provides an especially useful framework for this task because it connects linguistic theory with real-world language problems. In the field of English teacher education, applied linguistics makes it possible to bridge theoretical knowledge and classroom practice. It allows future teachers to understand language learning as a process influenced by cognitive, social, cultural, emotional, technological, and institutional factors. Several works in the corpus emphasize that applied linguistics emerged as a field concerned with the practical application of linguistic knowledge to language teaching, communication, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, multilingualism, and second language acquisition (Liu & Wei, 2026; Mera, n.d.; AlmadHady, 2023).

In teacher education, this bridge between theory and practice is essential. Future English teachers need to understand that language teaching is not merely the delivery of pre-established content, but a process of interpreting learners' needs, designing meaningful learning experiences, evaluating progress, and adapting instruction to specific contexts. In this regard, linguistic knowledge becomes pedagogical knowledge when it informs the teacher's decisions about what to teach, how to teach it, when to provide feedback, how to sequence content, and how to evaluate learner performance. Thus, linguistics becomes a formative axis that supports teaching methodology, assessment, material design, curriculum planning, and reflective practice.

This chapter is organized around that principle. It assumes that the linguistic formation of English teachers must integrate different but interconnected dimensions of language. First, phonology is examined as the basis for pronunciation, listening comprehension, rhythm, stress, intonation, and oral intelligibility. Second, syntax is analyzed as the structural system that enables sentence formation, grammatical awareness, academic writing, and error analysis. Third, semantics is discussed as the study of meaning construction, lexical

relations, ambiguity, and conceptual interpretation. Fourth, pragmatics is explored as the dimension that explains language use in context, communicative intention, politeness, intercultural interaction, and pragmatic competence. Fifth, discourse analysis is considered essential for understanding academic communication, classroom interaction, metadiscourse, discourse markers, and the organization of knowledge in higher education. Finally, sociolinguistic and second language acquisition perspectives are incorporated to show how language learning is shaped by identity, culture, multilingualism, cognition, affective variables, and institutional conditions.

The chapter also recognizes that the linguistic foundation of English teacher education should respond to contemporary changes in higher education. English is increasingly associated with academic internationalization, English-medium instruction, digital communication, online learning environments, artificial intelligence, academic writing, and intercultural mobility. These transformations require teachers to understand not only traditional linguistic structures, but also new forms of language use in digital, academic, multilingual, and professional spaces. For instance, studies on digital vocabulary, English-medium instruction, blended learning, and online communication show that English teaching today is situated within broader technological and sociocultural transformations.

Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is not to present linguistics as a purely theoretical discipline, but to demonstrate its relevance for English teacher education in higher education. The central argument is that future English teachers require linguistic foundations to become reflective professionals capable of analyzing language, interpreting learner development, mediating academic communication, and participating in curriculum design. Linguistics, therefore, is not an accessory component of teacher education; it is one of its structural foundations.

II. DEVELOPMENT

Applied linguistics as a foundational axis for english teacher education in higher education

Applied linguistics constitutes one of the most significant foundations for English teacher education because it allows the future teacher to understand language beyond its formal description and to interpret it as a living, situated, and pedagogically relevant phenomenon. In higher education, the preparation of English teachers requires more than

the ability to speak the language, explain grammatical rules, or apply classroom strategies. It demands an analytical understanding of how language is structured, how it is acquired, how it functions in interaction, how it is shaped by culture, and how it becomes an academic and professional resource. Applied linguistics offers precisely this integrative perspective, since it connects linguistic theory with real-world language problems and transforms abstract knowledge about language into pedagogical, curricular, and communicative decisions.

The importance of applied linguistics lies in its capacity to bridge theory and practice. Theoretical linguistics traditionally examines the nature, structure, and functioning of language, while applied linguistics uses this knowledge to address practical issues related to language teaching, learning, assessment, communication, translation, discourse, sociolinguistics, technology, and language policy. This distinction is relevant for English teacher education because teachers do not work with language as an abstract object alone; they work with learners, contexts, errors, needs, identities, institutions, curricula, and communicative purposes. Therefore, the future English teacher must be able to connect the scientific study of language with the realities of classroom practice. The corpus reviewed for this chapter repeatedly emphasizes that applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary field that has expanded from language teaching toward second language acquisition, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, technology, multilingualism, and language policy.

From a historical perspective, applied linguistics emerged in response to the need for practical solutions to language-related problems. Its development is closely associated with the evolution of language teaching methods, the growth of second language acquisition research, and the recognition that language learning is influenced by structural, cognitive, social, cultural, and educational factors. Early approaches to language teaching tended to be dominated by structural views of language and behaviorist theories of learning. Under this orientation, teaching frequently emphasized repetition, habit formation, grammatical patterns, and controlled practice. However, later developments in communicative competence, sociocultural theory, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and cognitive approaches broadened the field by showing that language cannot be reduced to a set of isolated forms. It is also a tool for meaning-making, social interaction, identity construction, academic participation, and intercultural communication.

This historical evolution is crucial for teacher education because it shows that every teaching method is supported by an implicit or explicit theory of language. If language is conceived mainly as structure, teaching will prioritize phonology, morphology, syntax, sentence patterns, and accuracy. If language is conceived as communication, teaching will focus on functions, interaction, fluency, negotiation of meaning, and contextualized use. If language is conceived as social practice, teaching will address identity, culture, discourse, power relations, multilingualism, and participation in communities of practice. Applied linguistics does not require teachers to choose only one of these views; rather, it enables them to integrate them critically according to the needs of learners and the purposes of instruction. Kissi's course material for pre-service teachers identifies precisely these roots of applied linguistics by relating theories of language, foreign language teaching methods, learning theories, and context as essential components of teacher preparation.

In the formation of English teachers, this integration is essential because the classroom is never a neutral space. It is a site where linguistic forms, learner histories, institutional expectations, assessment demands, cultural assumptions, and communicative goals converge. An English teacher who has been trained only in methods may know how to organize an activity, but may not fully understand why a learner struggles with a particular structure, why pronunciation affects intelligibility, why a written sentence fails to communicate academic meaning, or why a grammatically correct utterance may be pragmatically inappropriate. In contrast, a teacher with applied linguistic awareness can interpret classroom events as evidence of broader language learning processes. Such a teacher can analyze learner errors, identify patterns of interlanguage development, adjust input, create opportunities for output, design tasks that promote noticing, and connect classroom instruction with academic literacy.

The teacher, from this perspective, becomes an applied linguist in practice. This does not mean that every teacher must become a theoretical linguist or a researcher in the strict academic sense. Rather, it means that the teacher must develop the ability to observe language, interpret learner production, understand communicative problems, and make pedagogical decisions grounded in linguistic knowledge. Kissi's pedagogical objectives for applied linguistics courses addressed to pre-service teachers include understanding the role of linguistics in foreign language teaching and learning, discerning the relationship

between theory and practice, contextualizing language instruction, recognizing sociopolitical factors, and reaching the conclusion that the teacher is also an applied linguist. This idea is particularly valuable for the present chapter because it places linguistic knowledge at the center of teacher identity.

Applied linguistics is also relevant because it helps English teachers understand the limitations of purely traditional approaches to grammar and language teaching. Historically, the Grammar Translation Method emphasized vocabulary, grammar rules, translation, reading, and writing, while giving little attention to speaking and listening. Although this method contributed to the formal study of language, it proved insufficient for developing communicative ability. Later movements, such as the Reform Movement and the Direct Method, placed greater emphasis on speech, phonetics, pronunciation, and oral communication. These historical shifts reveal that the teaching of English has always depended on changing assumptions about what language is and how it should be learned. Applied linguistics allows future teachers to examine these shifts critically and to avoid adopting methods mechanically without understanding their theoretical foundations.

In contemporary higher education, this critical awareness is especially important because English teachers face increasingly diverse demands. They are expected to develop learners' grammatical competence, communicative competence, academic writing, oral presentation skills, digital literacy, intercultural awareness, and professional communication. They must also work with learners who may have different levels of preparation, different linguistic backgrounds, and different degrees of exposure to English. Studies on higher education contexts demonstrate that many students arrive at university with significant linguistic difficulties, particularly in grammar, writing, vocabulary, and academic expression. Moyo's study on first-year university students in South Africa, for example, connects underpreparedness with limited English grammar awareness and shows that students' difficulties with morphologically and syntactically corrupted texts reveal deeper problems in grammatical awareness and academic preparation.

This evidence is significant because it suggests that linguistic weaknesses are not merely surface-level mistakes. They may affect reading comprehension, academic writing, disciplinary learning, and student participation in higher education. When students lack grammatical awareness, they may struggle to interpret academic texts, construct coherent arguments, write complete sentences, use connectors appropriately, or communicate

complex meanings. For future English teachers, such difficulties become doubly important. They must overcome them in their own language development and learn how to help others overcome them pedagogically. Therefore, applied linguistics offers a framework for understanding errors not as simple failures, but as evidence of learning processes, gaps in linguistic knowledge, and opportunities for instruction.

Error analysis is one of the most useful applied linguistic tools for teacher education. It allows teachers to identify, classify, and interpret learner errors in relation to grammar, vocabulary, syntax, morphology, discourse, and meaning. Instead of correcting errors randomly, teachers can determine whether they are local or global, whether they affect intelligibility, whether they reflect first language influence, whether they arise from overgeneralization, or whether they indicate incomplete acquisition of a rule. This perspective is especially relevant for teacher trainees, whose written English may reveal recurring grammatical and lexical problems. The study on grammatical and lexical errors in the written English of teacher trainees shows that vocabulary misuse, tense errors, and structural flaws are frequent and have direct implications for English instruction and teacher training curricula.

The value of applied linguistics is not limited to grammar. It also supports the development of communicative competence, a concept that transformed language teaching by moving beyond the idea that knowing a language means knowing its grammatical system alone. Communicative competence implies the ability to use language appropriately in relation to context, purpose, audience, genre, and social norms. This shift is essential for English teacher education because it requires future teachers to help learners develop not only accuracy but also fluency, coherence, appropriateness, strategic ability, and pragmatic sensitivity. In higher education, communicative competence also includes the ability to participate in academic discourse, construct arguments, interpret specialized texts, and interact across cultures.

Applied linguistics therefore expands the teacher's understanding of what must be taught. English instruction cannot be reduced to grammar explanation, vocabulary lists, or pronunciation drills. It must include the development of academic reading, writing, listening, speaking, interaction, critical interpretation, and discourse awareness. The systematic mapping of English learning strategies in higher education identifies metacognitive, cognitive, socio-emotional, and technological strategies as central to

university students' English learning. It also highlights the relevance of self-regulated learning, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, feedback, anxiety reduction, and educational platforms for scientific and communicative English. These findings demonstrate that contemporary English learning is multidimensional and that applied linguistics must engage with cognitive, emotional, technological, and academic factors.

Another contribution of applied linguistics is its attention to second language acquisition. SLA research helps teachers understand how learners acquire, restructure, and use a new language over time. It explains why exposure alone is not always sufficient, why feedback matters, why output helps learners notice gaps in their language, why anxiety can restrict participation, and why motivation, identity, age, context, and learning strategies influence development. Pei's study on language learning strategies among higher-level students shows that learning context strongly affects strategy use. Factors such as access to the target language, participation in academic environments, learning resources, feedback on errors, exposure to diverse accents, and beliefs about social reactions influence how learners engage with language learning. This insight is directly applicable to teacher education because teachers must design learning environments that respond to contextual limitations and possibilities.

In EFL contexts, applied linguistics is particularly necessary because students often have limited access to authentic English outside the classroom. Unlike ESL learners who may encounter English in daily social life, EFL learners depend heavily on classroom input, teacher mediation, instructional materials, digital resources, and planned opportunities for interaction. This condition places a significant responsibility on the teacher. The teacher must not only present language content but also create the conditions for meaningful exposure, communicative practice, feedback, and reflection. Applied linguistics provides the theoretical basis for this mediation by explaining how input, interaction, output, feedback, and learner strategies contribute to acquisition.

The sociocultural dimension of applied linguistics further enriches English teacher education. Language learning is not only an individual cognitive process; it is also mediated by interaction, culture, tools, communities, and social relationships. Sociocultural theory emphasizes that learning takes place in physical and sociocultural contexts and that knowledge is co-constructed through participation and mediation. Ghiațau's work on sociocultural theory-based pedagogy highlights that teaching and

learning are culturally and linguistically mediated, situated, participatory, reflective, based on communities of practice, and accompanied by dynamic assessment. This perspective is important for English teacher education because it frames the classroom as a social environment where language is learned through participation, collaboration, scaffolding, and meaningful interaction.

In this regard, applied linguistics also helps teachers understand the relationship between English and identity. Learners do not simply acquire linguistic forms; they negotiate who they are when using another language. This is evident in multilingual and digital contexts, where English may function as a resource for affiliation, mobility, academic participation, or social distinction. The study on internet-inspired English vocabulary among Sinhala-English bilinguals of Generation Z shows that young bilingual speakers combine global digital slang with localized terms to reinforce peer bonds, signal cultural affiliation, and negotiate bilingual identity in digital spaces. For English teachers, this means that language instruction must be sensitive to how learners use English to construct identities in academic, social, and digital environments.

Higher education also places English within processes of internationalization. English-medium instruction, academic mobility, research publication, and global professional communication have increased the demand for English competence among both students and instructors. The growth of EMI tertiary programs in Spain illustrates how universities have expanded English-medium degrees as part of internationalization, while also revealing challenges related to instructors' linguistic competence, confidence, and willingness to teach through English. This is relevant for teacher education because future English teachers may work in contexts where English is not only a subject but also a medium for academic content, institutional development, and international collaboration.

Technology has further expanded the scope of applied linguistics in English teacher education. Digital platforms, learning management systems, artificial intelligence, podcasts, online corpora, virtual classrooms, and blended learning environments have transformed how English is taught and learned. However, applied linguistics cautions that technology should not be understood as a solution by itself. Its value depends on how it supports linguistic development, learner engagement, interaction, feedback, autonomy, and assessment. Horváthová's study on refining an English syntax course through Moodle shows that digital technologies can support linguistic competence, digital skills, and time

management when they are integrated into course design through lectures, study materials, exercises, assignments, feedback, and e-portfolios.

Similarly, studies on blended learning and podcasts in higher education show that digital resources can enhance English learning when they respond to pedagogical needs. Blended learning combines face-to-face and online interaction, offering flexibility, access to resources, and opportunities for student engagement. Podcast-based learning, particularly in pandemic and post-pandemic contexts, demonstrates how audio resources can support listening, autonomy, and language exposure. Applied linguistics helps teachers evaluate these tools not by their novelty but by their contribution to language development and communicative competence.

A useful way to synthesize the role of applied linguistics in English teacher education is to consider the following table:

Table 1
Dimensions of applied linguistics in english teacher education

Dimension of Applied Linguistics	Contribution to English Teacher Education	Pedagogical Implication
Linguistic theory	Explains language as structure, meaning, use, and discourse	Supports informed explanation of language phenomena
Second language acquisition	Interprets how learners develop interlanguage and communicative ability	Guides input, interaction, feedback, and output
Error analysis	Identifies patterns in learner production	Supports diagnostic and remedial teaching
Sociolinguistics	Examines language, identity, variation, and society	Promotes intercultural and multilingual awareness
Pragmatics	Explains meaning in context and communicative intention	Develops appropriate and effective communication
Discourse analysis	Studies academic, classroom, and professional discourse	Strengthens academic literacy and interaction
Technology and language learning	Analyzes digital mediation of language learning	Supports blended, autonomous, and interactive learning
Curriculum and assessment	Connects language goals with institutional planning	Aligns outcomes, content, methods, and evaluation

Note. The table summarizes the main dimensions through which applied linguistics contributes to English teacher education in higher education. Each dimension connects a specific field of linguistic inquiry with its pedagogical implication for the preparation of future English teachers.

Applied linguistics functions as a foundational axis for English teacher education in higher education because it connects the scientific study of language with the practical, social,

cognitive, and institutional demands of teaching. Its contribution lies in helping future teachers understand English as a system of forms, a resource for communication, a medium for academic discourse, a space for cultural negotiation, and an object of pedagogical intervention. Through applied linguistics, teachers acquire the analytical tools needed to interpret learner difficulties, examine errors, design meaningful instruction, integrate technological resources, and align classroom practices with broader curricular purposes. For this reason, the linguistic formation of English teachers must begin with an applied linguistic perspective, since it prepares them not only to teach English, but also to understand the language learning process in its full academic, social, and human complexity.

Phonological and syntactic structures in english teacher education

The linguistic formation of English teachers in higher education requires particular attention to two structural dimensions of language: phonology and syntax. These dimensions constitute essential foundations for understanding how English is perceived, produced, organized, and taught. Phonology allows teachers to analyze the sound system of English, including pronunciation, stress, rhythm, intonation, phonemic contrasts, and prosodic features that affect oral intelligibility. Syntax, on the other hand, enables teachers to understand how words combine into phrases, clauses, sentences, and larger structures that support grammatical accuracy, academic writing, and discourse construction. Together, phonological and syntactic knowledge provide future English teachers with analytical tools to interpret learner production, explain linguistic difficulties, design instructional activities, and support the development of communicative competence.

In English as a Foreign Language contexts, phonology is especially important because learners frequently have limited exposure to authentic spoken English outside the classroom. Their opportunities to perceive natural rhythm, stress patterns, connected speech, intonation contours, and pronunciation variation are often restricted to instructional materials, teacher talk, digital resources, and classroom interaction. This limitation can affect both listening comprehension and oral production. Learners may know vocabulary and grammar but still experience difficulty understanding spoken English or being understood by others. Therefore, English teachers need to recognize that pronunciation is not a decorative component of language learning; it is part of

communicative competence and must be integrated into teacher education as a systematic field of knowledge.

Phonological competence involves more than the ability to imitate individual sounds. It includes awareness of how sounds function contrastively in a language, how stress differentiates meaning or organizes speech, how rhythm influences fluency, and how intonation conveys attitudes, emphasis, questions, certainty, doubt, politeness, or emotional stance. For English learners, challenges may emerge when the phonological system of the first language does not contain certain English sounds, when syllable structures differ, when stress placement is unpredictable, or when intonation patterns do not align with communicative expectations in English. In this sense, pronunciation difficulties are not merely articulatory problems; they are also cognitive, perceptual, sociolinguistic, and pedagogical issues.

The pedagogical relevance of phonology becomes visible in studies focused on oral performance and public speaking among EFL learners. Ayiz and Tauchid's mixed-methods study on the peer teaching method in tertiary education found improvements in pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary use, fluency, confidence, and reduction of public speaking anxiety among EFL learners. This finding is significant for teacher education because it suggests that oral development depends not only on linguistic input but also on pedagogical environments that reduce anxiety, promote collaboration, and provide repeated opportunities for speaking. Pronunciation and fluency improve when learners are placed in supportive contexts where they can rehearse, receive feedback, observe peers, and gradually develop confidence.

The relation between phonology and affective variables is particularly important. Learners often experience anxiety when speaking English because pronunciation exposes them publicly. Unlike silent reading or individual writing, oral production places the learner's voice, accent, hesitations, rhythm, and errors in front of others. If the classroom environment is punitive or excessively focused on correction, learners may avoid speaking. If, however, the environment is collaborative and supportive, pronunciation practice can become a space for experimentation and growth. Teacher education must therefore prepare future English teachers to address pronunciation pedagogically without humiliating learners or reinforcing unrealistic native-speaker standards.

This issue becomes more relevant when considering speaking difficulties among EFL learners. Güneş and Sarıgöz's study on speaking struggles identifies affective, linguistic, and contextual factors that influence students' willingness to communicate, including anxiety, motivation, attitudes, linguistic difficulties, negative beliefs, classroom silence, and limited speaking opportunities. Although the study focuses on young learners, its implications extend to higher education because many university students continue to experience oral inhibition, especially in EFL contexts where English is not used naturally in daily communication. For future teachers, this means that phonological instruction must be connected to speaking pedagogy, confidence building, classroom interaction, and communicative practice.

A phonologically informed teacher can design activities that integrate perception and production. Instead of teaching pronunciation only through repetition of isolated sounds, teachers can develop tasks involving listening discrimination, minimal pairs, stress recognition, shadowing, oral reading, role-play, academic presentations, podcast production, peer feedback, and discourse-based pronunciation practice. These activities help learners notice how pronunciation contributes to meaning. For example, sentence stress can mark contrast, intonation can signal uncertainty, and rhythm can support fluency. In academic English, prosody also contributes to oral presentations, lectures, debates, and classroom interaction. Therefore, phonology should be linked to authentic communicative contexts rather than treated as an isolated technical unit.

The development of digital resources has expanded the possibilities for phonological learning. Podcasts, audio recordings, virtual simulations, speech recognition tools, video conferencing, and language applications can expose learners to different accents, rhythms, and communicative situations. The study on English podcasts in higher education shows that podcast-based resources can be used as media for English language learning, especially in contexts where online learning has reduced direct interaction between lecturers and students. Such tools are valuable for pronunciation and listening because they provide repeated, flexible, and accessible exposure to spoken English. However, future teachers must learn to use them intentionally. Technology by itself does not guarantee phonological development; it must be integrated into tasks with clear linguistic goals, feedback, and learner reflection.

While phonology supports oral intelligibility, syntax provides the structural foundation for sentence formation and written accuracy. Syntax is the branch of linguistics that studies how words are organized into phrases, clauses, and sentences. In English teacher education, syntactic knowledge is indispensable because teachers must explain how English structures are formed, why certain sentence patterns are grammatical or ungrammatical, and how syntactic choices affect meaning, emphasis, cohesion, and academic style. Without syntactic awareness, teachers may correct errors intuitively but fail to provide learners with meaningful explanations that support long-term development.

Syntax has often been misunderstood in language teaching as equivalent to traditional grammar rules. However, syntax is not merely a list of prescriptive norms. It is a system that allows speakers and writers to organize meaning through structure. It explains word order, clause relations, subordination, coordination, tense and aspect patterns, agreement, complementation, modification, sentence complexity, and information structure. For English learners, syntactic development is central to academic writing because higher education requires the ability to construct definitions, explanations, arguments, comparisons, cause-effect relations, and critical interpretations. These functions depend on sentence-level and paragraph-level control.

The importance of syntax becomes evident in higher education contexts where students struggle with grammatical awareness and academic writing. Moyo's study on first-year university students in South Africa identifies underpreparedness as partly connected to limited English grammar awareness, particularly in relation to morphological and syntactic correction tasks. The study is useful because it frames grammar not as a peripheral concern but as a condition for academic participation. If students cannot recognize or produce well-formed structures, they may experience difficulties in reading, writing, and learning disciplinary content. This has direct implications for English teacher education: future teachers must learn to diagnose grammatical weaknesses and design instruction that develops syntactic awareness.

Grammatical awareness is not the same as memorizing terminology. A learner may know the names of grammatical categories but still be unable to use them effectively in communication. Conversely, a learner may produce accurate language without being able to explain it formally. For teacher education, however, future teachers need both functional use and analytical understanding. They must be able to use English accurately and explain

its structures pedagogically. This dual requirement is particularly important for teacher trainees, who will later become models of language use and mediators of linguistic knowledge for their students.

The study of grammatical and lexical errors in teacher trainees reinforces this point. Akorli's case study of written English among final-year teacher trainees found frequent errors in vocabulary misuse, tense, and structural flaws, highlighting the need for enhanced writing practice, improved reading habits, and institutional interventions in teacher training curricula. These findings show that syntactic weaknesses among teacher trainees are not isolated academic problems. They affect future teaching quality because teachers who lack syntactic control may reproduce errors, provide insufficient explanations, or avoid grammar instruction altogether. Therefore, English teacher education must include systematic syntactic development as part of professional preparation.

The relationship between syntax and writing is especially strong. Academic writing requires more than correct spelling or vocabulary. It demands control of sentence patterns, clause relationships, transitions, nominalization, passive constructions, relative clauses, conditional structures, and complex syntactic arrangements that allow writers to express abstract and logical relationships. The systematic literature review on sentence patterns in ESL undergraduate writing emphasizes the significance of sentence variety and syntactic diversity for essay writing, linguistic maturity, clarity, and higher-order thinking. This perspective is highly relevant for English teacher education because future teachers must learn to help students move from simple sentence production toward more sophisticated academic expression.

Syntactic development should therefore be connected to writing pedagogy. Teachers can guide learners to analyze sentence patterns, combine clauses, expand phrases, use connectors, transform simple sentences into complex ones, and revise unclear structures. Such work should not be reduced to mechanical drills. It should be linked to meaning-making. For example, subordinate clauses can express cause, contrast, condition, purpose, or concession. Passive voice can shift focus from actor to process. Relative clauses can add precision. Nominalization can support academic abstraction. Thus, syntax becomes a resource for thinking and writing, not only a system of correctness.

Digital technologies can support the teaching of syntax when they are integrated into course design. Horváthová's study on refining an English syntax course for undergraduate English language students through Moodle shows that a blended approach can support linguistic competence, digital skills, time management, feedback, and e-portfolio development. This study is important because it demonstrates that syntax can be taught through digital environments without reducing academic rigor. Online platforms can provide lectures, exercises, assignments, feedback, forums, quizzes, and self-paced review. For future teachers, this suggests that grammar and syntax instruction can be modernized through blended learning, provided that technological tools are aligned with linguistic objectives.

The teaching of syntax also requires an appropriate balance between explicit instruction and communicative use. Some approaches to language teaching have rejected grammar instruction because of its association with traditional methods. However, rejecting grammar entirely can leave learners without the tools needed to understand structure and improve accuracy. The issue is not whether grammar should be taught, but how it should be taught. In teacher education, syntax should be presented as a meaning-making system connected to authentic language use. Explicit explanation can be useful when it is followed by contextualized practice, analysis of real texts, production tasks, peer review, and feedback.

This balance is particularly important for adult learners and university students. Older learners can often benefit from explicit grammatical explanation because they possess cognitive maturity and metalinguistic capacity. Moyo's discussion of grammatical awareness in higher education suggests that older English language learners may need direct and intentional grammar instruction to address persistent errors and support academic literacy. However, such instruction must avoid becoming disconnected from communication. It should help learners see how syntax organizes meaning in reading, writing, speaking, and academic discourse.

Phonological and syntactic instruction share a common pedagogical challenge: both can become overly technical if taught without communicative purpose. Pronunciation can become a set of isolated sound drills, and syntax can become a list of abstract rules. In both cases, learners may fail to see the relevance of linguistic knowledge for real communication. Teacher education must therefore prepare future English teachers to

integrate form and meaning. Phonology should be taught as part of listening, speaking, intelligibility, and oral interaction. Syntax should be taught as part of writing, reading comprehension, academic expression, and discourse organization. This integration allows linguistic knowledge to become functional, reflective, and pedagogically meaningful.

The following table summarizes the contributions of phonology and syntax to English teacher education:

Table 2

Phonology and syntax as structural foundations for english teacher education

Linguistic Dimension	Core Elements	Contribution to Teacher Education	Pedagogical Applications
Phonology	Sounds, phonemes, stress, rhythm, intonation, prosody	Develops awareness of oral intelligibility, listening comprehension, pronunciation, and spoken interaction	Minimal pairs, listening discrimination, pronunciation feedback, oral presentations, podcasts, shadowing, peer speaking tasks
Syntax	Word order, phrases, clauses, sentence patterns, subordination, coordination, agreement	Strengthens grammatical explanation, academic writing, error analysis, and sentence-level meaning-making	Sentence combining, grammar analysis, academic writing revision, Moodle-based exercises, clause transformation, peer editing
Phonology and Syntax Together	Form, structure, meaning, and communicative use	Supports integrated linguistic competence for future English teachers	Integrated skills tasks, discourse-based grammar, oral academic presentations, writing workshops, corrective feedback

Note. The table presents phonology and syntax as complementary dimensions of linguistic competence in English teacher education. Phonology contributes primarily to oral intelligibility and listening-speaking development, while syntax supports grammatical awareness, academic writing, and structural explanation. Both dimensions become pedagogically meaningful when connected to authentic communication, learner needs, and reflective teaching practice.

For future English teachers, phonological and syntactic knowledge also contributes to assessment. Teachers need criteria to evaluate pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, sentence complexity, and coherence. Without linguistic knowledge, assessment may become subjective or limited to general impressions. A teacher with phonological awareness can distinguish between pronunciation features that seriously affect intelligibility and those that simply reflect accent variation. A teacher with syntactic awareness can distinguish between local errors that do not obstruct meaning and global

errors that disrupt comprehension. This distinction is central to fair and pedagogically useful assessment.

In addition, phonology and syntax contribute to material design. Teachers must choose or create materials that expose learners to relevant pronunciation patterns, natural spoken input, sentence structures, and academic writing models. Materials should not merely present decontextualized language. They should help learners notice how English works in real communicative and academic contexts. For example, a unit on academic presentations may integrate pronunciation of key terms, sentence stress for emphasis, discourse markers for sequencing, and syntactic structures for defining concepts. A unit on essay writing may integrate sentence patterns, connectors, clause relations, and academic vocabulary. In this way, phonological and syntactic foundations become part of integrated pedagogical design.

It is also necessary to recognize that English today is used in diverse global contexts. This reality affects both pronunciation and grammar teaching. In relation to phonology, teacher education should avoid imposing a rigid native-speaker model as the only legitimate target. Instead, the goal should be intelligibility, communicative effectiveness, and awareness of variation. In relation to syntax, teachers should maintain academic standards while also recognizing that English is used across multilingual contexts where variation exists. This does not mean abandoning accuracy; it means teaching accuracy with awareness of purpose, genre, audience, and context.

Phonological and syntactic structures are fundamental to English teacher education because they provide the basis for understanding how English is heard, spoken, organized, written, and taught. Phonology supports oral intelligibility, listening comprehension, pronunciation development, and confidence in spoken interaction. Syntax supports grammatical awareness, academic writing, sentence construction, and error analysis. Both dimensions are essential for future teachers, not as isolated theoretical content, but as practical knowledge that informs pedagogy, feedback, assessment, material design, and curriculum planning. A teacher who understands phonology and syntax can guide learners more effectively because such a teacher is able to explain language, interpret difficulties, and design meaningful opportunities for communicative and academic growth.

Semantics, Pragmatics, and Meaning Construction in English Teacher Education

The linguistic preparation of English teachers in higher education cannot be complete without a deep understanding of meaning. Language teaching is not only concerned with the production of correct sounds or the organization of grammatically acceptable sentences; it is also concerned with how learners construct, interpret, negotiate, and use meaning in specific communicative contexts. For this reason, semantics and pragmatics constitute two central dimensions of English teacher education. Semantics provides the tools to understand lexical meaning, conceptual relations, ambiguity, reference, sense relations, and the way words and expressions organize knowledge. Pragmatics, in turn, explains how meaning is shaped by context, speaker intention, cultural norms, interactional expectations, inference, politeness, and social relationships. Together, these fields help future teachers understand that communication in English depends not only on what is said, but also on what is meant, implied, interpreted, and negotiated.

In many traditional approaches to English teaching, meaning has been associated mainly with vocabulary acquisition. Learners are expected to memorize word lists, definitions, translations, and grammatical equivalents. Although vocabulary knowledge is essential, this view is insufficient because words do not function as isolated units with fixed meanings. Meaning changes according to context, discipline, genre, speaker intention, audience, and communicative purpose. In higher education, this complexity becomes even more evident because academic discourse frequently uses words that have specialized, abstract, or discipline-specific meanings. Terms such as model, framework, theory, discourse, competence, interaction, and curriculum may have different meanings depending on the field in which they are used. Therefore, English teachers must be prepared to teach vocabulary not only as a lexical inventory, but as a system of meaning relations embedded in academic and social contexts.

Semantics is essential for this task because it allows teachers to analyze how lexical items relate to one another and how meaning is organized. Lexical meaning involves synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, polysemy, homonymy, collocation, semantic fields, metaphor, and conceptual categorization. These relations influence how learners interpret texts and produce discourse. For example, a student may know the word analysis but may not fully understand how it differs from description, interpretation, evaluation, or discussion in academic writing. Similarly, learners may translate terms directly from their first language

without recognizing their semantic restrictions in English. A semantically informed teacher can help learners identify these differences and develop more precise academic expression.

One of the most important semantic challenges in higher education is lexical ambiguity. Academic discourse is commonly associated with clarity, precision, and explicitness; however, it frequently contains words that carry multiple possible meanings. The study on lexical ambiguity and meaning negotiation in academic discourse emphasizes that ambiguity emerges through polysemy, homonymy, vagueness, and context-dependent meaning, especially in academic communication. It also argues that lexical ambiguity is not always a communicative obstacle; in many cases, it functions as a strategic resource that supports conceptual flexibility and interdisciplinary dialogue. This point is particularly relevant for English teacher education because teachers must help learners manage ambiguity rather than assume that every ambiguous expression is a problem to be eliminated.

In academic contexts, ambiguity may occur when the same term is used differently across disciplines. For example, the word *function* may refer to a grammatical role in linguistics, a mathematical relation in mathematics, a social role in sociology, or a communicative purpose in discourse analysis. The word *culture* may refer to artistic production, institutional norms, social values, or classroom practices. The word *competence* may indicate linguistic knowledge, communicative ability, professional performance, or curricular outcomes. Learners who are not trained to recognize these semantic shifts may misinterpret academic texts or use terms imprecisely. Therefore, English teachers need to develop learners' semantic awareness by encouraging them to examine definitions, contexts, examples, disciplinary conventions, and co-textual clues.

Meaning construction also depends on background knowledge. Reading comprehension studies grounded in schema theory show that readers interpret texts by connecting new information with previous knowledge, experiences, vocabulary, grammar, and cultural understanding. Todorova's theoretical framework on cognitive processes in reading comprehension explains that readers activate existing schemas to interpret texts, infer meanings, make predictions, and construct mental representations. This insight is relevant for semantics because words and texts do not carry meaning independently from readers. Learners construct meaning by relating linguistic input to prior knowledge. If they lack

vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, or cultural background, comprehension may become limited even when the text appears linguistically accessible.

For English teachers, this means that semantic instruction must be connected to reading, writing, and academic literacy. Teachers should not simply ask learners to memorize new vocabulary; they should guide them to understand how words function in sentences, paragraphs, genres, and disciplines. Activities such as semantic mapping, lexical field analysis, contextual guessing, corpus exploration, collocation analysis, paraphrasing, definition writing, and comparison of near-synonyms can help learners deepen their understanding of meaning. For example, learners can compare the words problem, issue, challenge, limitation, and gap in academic writing to understand how each term frames research differently. Such activities strengthen not only vocabulary but also conceptual precision.

However, meaning cannot be fully explained by semantics alone. Pragmatics is necessary because speakers often communicate more than the literal meaning of their words. Pragmatics studies how contextual factors interact with linguistic meaning in communication. It examines how speakers express intentions, how hearers infer meanings, how social norms shape interaction, and how language is adapted to situations. In language teaching, pragmatics is crucial because learners may produce grammatically correct utterances that are socially inappropriate, culturally unexpected, too direct, too vague, or pragmatically ineffective. Therefore, communicative competence must include pragmatic competence.

Pragmatic competence involves the ability to use and interpret language appropriately in context. It requires knowledge of speech acts, politeness strategies, implicatures, deixis, register, discourse markers, turn-taking, indirectness, stance, and sociocultural expectations. In English teacher education, this competence is essential because future teachers must prepare learners for real interactions in academic, professional, digital, and intercultural environments. A learner who knows grammar and vocabulary may still experience communicative failure if they cannot interpret implied meanings, recognize levels of formality, respond appropriately to feedback, participate in discussions, or adjust language to audience and purpose.

The doctoral work by Marcet is particularly valuable for understanding the importance of pragmatic competence in L2 classrooms. It argues that effective communication requires learners to process linguistic and non-linguistic information in real time, disambiguate encoded meaning, recover implicit meanings, interpret intentions, and respond to others' thoughts with minimal effort. The study also highlights that pragmatic challenges often arise because classroom instruction focuses excessively on linguistic input while giving insufficient attention to inferential processes and learners' pragmatic awareness. This finding has strong implications for English teacher education because it suggests that teachers must be trained to teach not only forms and meanings, but also interpretation, inference, and context-sensitive communication.

In many EFL classrooms, pragmatics is underrepresented. Textbooks may include dialogues, requests, apologies, or classroom expressions, but they often fail to explain how pragmatic choices depend on status, distance, setting, intention, cultural expectations, and communicative consequences. Learners may be taught how to say *Could you help me?* but not when this form is appropriate, how it differs from *Can you help me?*, *I was wondering if you could help me*, or *Help me with this*, and how each form may be interpreted differently depending on the relationship between speakers. Similarly, learners may learn expressions for agreement and disagreement, but not how to soften disagreement in academic discussions or how to express critique respectfully.

This gap is important in higher education because academic communication is deeply pragmatic. Students must learn how to ask questions, request clarification, disagree politely, present arguments, hedge claims, evaluate sources, express certainty and doubt, negotiate group work, participate in seminars, and write with appropriate academic stance. For example, academic writing often requires writers to avoid absolute claims and use cautious language such as *may*, *might*, *appears to*, *suggests*, *tends to*, and *could indicate*. These forms are not merely grammatical; they express epistemic stance and pragmatic positioning. Teachers who understand pragmatics can help learners recognize how academic politeness, caution, and authorial identity are constructed through language.

The study on certainty and doubt adverbials in academic discourse reinforces this idea. It explains that stance adverbials play an important role in academic writing because they indicate the degree of commitment authors have toward the information they present. This finding is pedagogically relevant because many EFL learners struggle to express

appropriate levels of certainty. They may write claims that sound too strong, too weak, or insufficiently supported. Teaching pragmatic and semantic features of stance can help students write more academically and participate more effectively in scholarly communication.

Pragmatics is also connected to culture. Language users do not interpret meaning only through grammar and vocabulary; they interpret it through cultural expectations, social norms, values, identities, and communicative histories. What is considered polite, direct, respectful, persuasive, or appropriate in one context may not be interpreted in the same way in another. For English teachers, this means that language teaching must include intercultural awareness. Learners should not be trained to imitate one cultural model uncritically, but to recognize how communicative norms vary and how English functions in global and multilingual contexts.

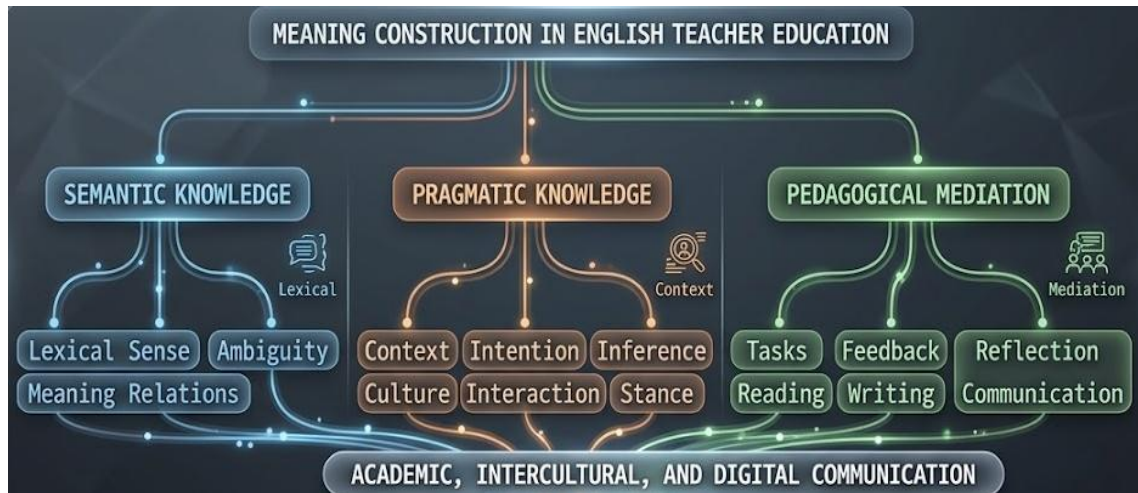
The relationship between pragmatics, culture, and technology is also increasingly important. Burk's work on collaborative classrooms emphasizes the incorporation of pragmatics and technology in language learning and highlights the importance of positive learning environments, collaboration, multiliteracies, and pragmatic competence. This perspective is relevant because digital environments have created new forms of pragmatic interaction. Learners communicate through emails, forums, chats, video calls, social media, learning platforms, and collaborative documents. Each environment has different norms of formality, timing, turn-taking, response length, politeness, and identity expression. English teachers must prepare learners to navigate these digital pragmatic contexts.

The role of English as a lingua franca also complicates pragmatic instruction. In many international settings, English is used by speakers who do not share the same first language or cultural background. Communication in such contexts depends less on native-speaker norms and more on negotiation, accommodation, intelligibility, clarification, and intercultural flexibility. Guido's study on English as a Lingua Franca in online intercultural communication shows how non-native speakers use English to express emotions, opinions, metaphors, and cultural perspectives in digital contexts. For teacher education, this suggests that pragmatic competence should not be framed only as the acquisition of native-like norms, but as the ability to communicate effectively, ethically, and flexibly across diverse contexts.

To clarify the relationship among semantics, pragmatics, and teacher education, the following figure is proposed.

Figure 1

Semantic and pragmatic foundations for meaning construction in english teacher education



Note. This figure was designed with the assistance of artificial intelligence to synthesize the relationship between semantic knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, and pedagogical mediation in English teacher education.

Semantic knowledge supports the interpretation of lexical meaning, sense relations, and ambiguity; pragmatic knowledge explains how context, intention, inference, culture, interaction, and stance shape communication; and pedagogical mediation transforms these dimensions into classroom tasks, feedback, reflective activities, and academic communication practices.

The pedagogical implications of this integration are significant. First, English teachers should design activities that help learners move from word recognition to meaning interpretation. This includes working with context, collocation, semantic fields, disciplinary vocabulary, and ambiguity. Second, teachers should create opportunities for learners to analyze authentic interactions and identify how meanings are implied, negotiated, softened, emphasized, or reformulated. Third, teachers should explicitly address pragmatic choices in academic communication, such as hedging, politeness, stance, disagreement, clarification, and metadiscourse. Fourth, teachers should integrate

cultural and intercultural reflection so that learners understand that meaning is socially situated.

In reading instruction, semantic and pragmatic awareness can help learners interpret academic texts more effectively. They can be guided to identify key terms, examine how authors define concepts, recognize ambiguity, infer unstated assumptions, and interpret stance. In writing instruction, learners can be taught to choose precise vocabulary, avoid overgeneralization, define terms, use hedging, express degrees of certainty, and address readers appropriately. In speaking instruction, learners can practice requests, explanations, disagreement, presentations, questions, and discussions with attention to tone, politeness, clarity, and audience. Thus, semantics and pragmatics support all language skills when integrated into meaningful tasks.

Assessment should also reflect these dimensions. If teachers assess only grammatical correctness, they may overlook whether learners can construct coherent meaning, interpret context, use appropriate stance, or communicate effectively in academic and intercultural situations. Rubrics for speaking and writing should therefore include criteria related to lexical precision, clarity of meaning, appropriateness, pragmatic effectiveness, coherence, and audience awareness. Such assessment practices help learners understand that effective English use involves more than formal accuracy.

Teacher education programs should also encourage future teachers to reflect on their own semantic and pragmatic competence. Many teacher trainees may have learned English through grammar-focused instruction and may not have received systematic training in pragmatics or discourse-based meaning. As a result, they may reproduce teaching practices that emphasize correctness while neglecting interpretation and context. To avoid this, teacher education should include analysis of authentic texts, classroom discourse, academic writing samples, intercultural interactions, digital communication, and learner errors. These practices help future teachers understand how meaning is constructed and how it can be taught.

Semantics and pragmatics are indispensable foundations for English teacher education because they explain how language becomes meaningful in academic, social, cultural, and communicative contexts. Semantics enables teachers to understand lexical meaning, ambiguity, conceptual relations, and vocabulary development, while pragmatics allows

them to interpret how context, intention, inference, politeness, stance, and culture shape communication. For future English teachers, these fields provide essential tools to move beyond the teaching of isolated forms and toward the development of meaningful, appropriate, and context-sensitive language use. In higher education, where English is increasingly linked to academic writing, intercultural communication, digital interaction, and professional development, semantic and pragmatic knowledge becomes a central component of teacher formation. A teacher who understands meaning construction can guide learners not only to say things correctly, but to communicate ideas with precision, relevance, awareness, and academic responsibility.

Academic discourse, sociolinguistic awareness, and intercultural communication in english teacher education

The linguistic preparation of English teachers in higher education must also include a strong understanding of academic discourse, sociolinguistic awareness, and intercultural communication. These dimensions expand the study of English beyond the sentence and beyond the individual act of communication, placing language within institutional, social, cultural, disciplinary, and digital environments. In university contexts, English is not only learned as a foreign language; it is also used to access academic literature, participate in scholarly discussions, write essays and research papers, interact in virtual platforms, engage with international communities, and construct professional identities. Therefore, future English teachers need to understand how discourse functions in higher education and how English operates across diverse sociolinguistic contexts.

Academic discourse can be understood as the set of language practices through which knowledge is produced, organized, communicated, evaluated, and legitimized in academic communities. It includes oral and written genres such as lectures, essays, research articles, conference presentations, classroom discussions, syllabi, reports, feedback, and institutional documents. For English teacher education, academic discourse is especially important because future teachers must learn not only to use English accurately, but also to guide learners in the production and interpretation of academic meanings. This requires attention to coherence, cohesion, stance, argumentation, metadiscourse, discourse markers, lexical bundles, disciplinary vocabulary, and genre conventions.

One of the central contributions of discourse analysis to English teacher education is that it helps teachers understand language as organization beyond isolated sentences. A grammatically correct sentence may still fail to function effectively if it is not connected to previous and subsequent ideas, if it does not respond to the communicative purpose of the text, or if it does not follow the expectations of the academic genre. In this sense, discourse competence involves the ability to organize ideas, guide readers or listeners, establish relationships between propositions, signal transitions, introduce evidence, express caution, and build arguments. For future English teachers, this competence is essential because academic success in higher education depends heavily on the ability to interpret and produce extended discourse.

Discourse markers are particularly relevant in this process because they help organize communication and signal relationships between ideas. The corpus includes a work on English discourse markers from sociocultural perspectives, which explains that discourse markers are linguistic elements that contribute to connectivity, optionality, coherence, and the organization of utterances within broader discourse. Although discourse markers may not always change the propositional content of a sentence, they guide interpretation by indicating contrast, continuation, reformulation, explanation, conclusion, emphasis, or interactional positioning. For example, expressions such as *however*, *therefore*, *in addition*, *on the other hand*, *actually*, *well*, and *you know* help speakers and writers organize meaning and orient their audience.

In English teacher education, discourse markers should not be treated as simple lists of connectors to memorize. Their pedagogical value lies in showing learners how texts and conversations are structured. In academic writing, discourse markers help construct logical progression and make argumentation easier to follow. In classroom interaction, they allow teachers and students to manage turns, introduce explanations, signal transitions, and maintain interaction. In oral presentations, they guide listeners through the structure of the speech. Therefore, future teachers should be trained to teach discourse markers as functional resources for coherence, academic organization, and communicative effectiveness.

Metadiscourse is another essential component of academic discourse. It refers to the linguistic resources writers and speakers use to organize discourse, express attitudes, engage readers, and signal how information should be interpreted. Malavasi's study on

metadiscursive constructions in linguistics essays compares academic writing by Italian EFL students and L1 English university students, highlighting the importance of metadiscourse, formulaic language, lexical bundles, and recurrent sequences in academic writing. This contribution is important because it shows that academic writing is not only a matter of grammar and vocabulary; it also depends on the ability to use conventional discourse patterns that help writers position themselves and guide their readers.

For EFL learners, metadiscourse can be difficult because it requires knowledge of academic conventions that may not be explicit in language instruction. Learners may be able to write individual sentences but still struggle to organize an introduction, present a research gap, refer to previous studies, express authorial caution, or guide the reader through an argument. Future English teachers must therefore understand metadiscourse as part of academic literacy. Teaching expressions such as this study argues, the findings suggest, it is important to note, in contrast, as discussed above, and the following section examines can help learners develop greater control over academic writing. However, these expressions should be taught in context, through analysis of authentic academic texts and guided writing practice.

The study of stance in academic discourse further reinforces the need to prepare teachers for discourse-based instruction. Academic writing is often mistakenly perceived as impersonal, neutral, and detached. Nevertheless, academic authors constantly position themselves in relation to their claims, evidence, readers, and disciplinary communities. The corpus-based contrastive study on certainty and doubt adverbials shows that stance adverbials are significant in academic writing because they allow authors to express degrees of commitment toward the propositions they present. This means that words and expressions such as certainly, probably, possibly, clearly, apparently, generally, and arguably are not merely adverbs; they are rhetorical tools that shape how knowledge is presented and interpreted.

This is highly relevant for English teacher education because many learners either overstate or understate their claims in academic writing. Some write with excessive certainty, presenting unsupported generalizations as facts. Others avoid taking a position and produce vague or weak arguments. A discourse-informed teacher can help students understand how academic stance works and how writers balance confidence with caution. This is especially important in research writing, where claims must be supported by

evidence and expressed with appropriate epistemic responsibility. Teaching stance therefore connects grammar, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse.

Academic discourse is also shaped by formulaic sequences and lexical bundles. These recurrent word combinations help writers and speakers perform academic functions such as introducing topics, referring to literature, presenting results, making comparisons, and signaling conclusions. For EFL learners, formulaic language can support fluency and academic naturalness because it provides ready-made patterns for organizing discourse. However, teachers must avoid encouraging mechanical repetition. Instead, lexical bundles should be taught as flexible resources that learners can adapt according to purpose, genre, and audience. This approach helps future teachers connect corpus-informed insights with academic writing pedagogy.

Classroom discourse is another key area for English teacher education. The classroom is not only a place where language is taught; it is also a discourse environment where teachers and students construct meanings, negotiate roles, ask questions, give feedback, clarify misunderstandings, and organize participation. The study on translinguistic corpus-based patterns of lexical bundles and interactional markers in teacher classroom discourse provides a useful basis for understanding how teacher talk is structured and how interactional language contributes to classroom communication. For future English teachers, this means that their own language in the classroom should be an object of reflection. The way a teacher asks questions, reformulates student responses, gives instructions, signals transitions, and provides feedback can either support or restrict learning.

Discourse analysis also helps future teachers understand the relationship between language and power in educational settings. Academic discourse is not neutral; it reflects institutional expectations, disciplinary norms, assessment criteria, and forms of authority. Students who are unfamiliar with these conventions may be perceived as weak writers or poor communicators, even when their ideas are valuable. English teachers therefore have the responsibility to make academic discourse visible and teachable. This includes explaining not only grammar and vocabulary, but also how academic communities organize knowledge, value evidence, construct arguments, and evaluate texts.

Sociolinguistic awareness broadens this discussion by examining the relationship between language and society. English is not a single uniform system used in the same way by all speakers. It varies across regions, communities, social groups, digital spaces, academic fields, and communicative situations. For English teachers, sociolinguistic awareness is essential because it helps them understand language variation, identity, multilingualism, code-switching, language attitudes, and the global role of English. In higher education, where English is linked to internationalization, academic mobility, and digital communication, these issues cannot be ignored.

The growth of English-medium instruction in tertiary education illustrates the sociolinguistic significance of English in contemporary universities. The study on EMI tertiary programs in Spain explains that the number of university programs offered in English has increased substantially in Europe, partly due to internationalization and the Bologna Process. This phenomenon has important implications for English teacher education because English is no longer taught only as a subject; it is increasingly used as a medium for teaching academic content. This shift requires teachers and instructors to develop linguistic competence, pedagogical awareness, and confidence in using English for disciplinary communication.

However, EMI also raises critical questions. If instructors teach content through English without sufficient linguistic preparation, students may receive simplified or less effective instruction. If students lack adequate English proficiency, they may struggle to understand disciplinary content. If institutions adopt EMI mainly for international prestige without supporting teachers and students, the policy may increase inequality rather than improve learning. Therefore, English teacher education should prepare future teachers to understand EMI not only as a language policy, but as a complex educational practice involving language, content, identity, access, and institutional planning.

English as a Lingua Franca also requires sociolinguistic reflection. In many academic and professional contexts, English is used among speakers who do not share the same first language. In such situations, communication depends on intelligibility, accommodation, negotiation of meaning, and intercultural sensitivity rather than strict adherence to native-speaker norms. Guido's study on English as a Lingua Franca in online cross-cultural communication demonstrates how non-native speakers use English to express emotions, opinions, cultural perspectives, and metaphorical meanings in digital

interaction. This challenges teacher education programs to reconsider what counts as successful English communication in global contexts.

For future English teachers, this does not mean abandoning standards or ignoring accuracy. Rather, it means understanding that English is used differently across contexts and that teaching should prepare learners for flexible, ethical, and intelligible communication. Teachers must help learners develop awareness of variation while also equipping them with the academic and professional norms required in specific contexts. The goal is not to impose a single model of English, but to help learners communicate effectively across local, regional, international, academic, and digital spaces.

Digital communication has intensified these sociolinguistic transformations. Online platforms have created new registers, lexical innovations, discourse practices, and identity performances. The study on internet-inspired English vocabulary among Sinhala-English bilinguals of Generation Z shows that young bilingual speakers use global internet slang and localized lexical items to construct group identity, reinforce peer bonds, and negotiate cultural affiliation in digital spaces. This finding is highly relevant for English teacher education because it reveals that learners encounter and use English outside formal academic contexts in creative, hybrid, and identity-rich ways.

Teachers must therefore be prepared to understand digital English without simply rejecting it as incorrect or informal. Internet-inspired vocabulary, code-mixing, abbreviations, memes, and hybrid expressions may not belong to formal academic writing, but they are part of contemporary language use. A sociolinguistically informed teacher can help learners distinguish between registers, understand audience expectations, and shift appropriately between informal digital communication and formal academic discourse. This is a crucial skill in higher education because students often move between social media, virtual learning environments, academic writing platforms, and professional communication.

Intercultural communication is closely connected to these issues. English teachers in higher education must prepare learners to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds, interpret diverse communicative norms, and avoid reducing English to a purely linguistic code. Intercultural competence involves openness, awareness, empathy, interpretation, comparison, and the ability to negotiate meaning across

difference. It also requires recognizing that communication problems may arise not only from grammar or vocabulary, but from differing assumptions about politeness, directness, silence, disagreement, authority, collaboration, and academic behavior.

In classroom practice, intercultural communication can be developed through tasks that require comparison of communicative norms, analysis of authentic interactions, reflection on misunderstandings, discussion of cultural assumptions, and collaborative projects with diverse participants. For example, learners may examine how disagreement is expressed in academic seminars, how emails to professors differ across cultures, how feedback is interpreted, or how group work expectations vary. Such activities connect pragmatics, discourse, and sociolinguistics in ways that are directly relevant to teacher education.

The sociocultural perspective also supports this broader view of language learning. Ghiațău's work on sociocultural theory-based pedagogy emphasizes that teaching and learning are culturally and linguistically mediated, situated, participatory, reflective, and connected to communities of practice. This perspective helps future English teachers understand that learners do not acquire English in isolation. They learn through interaction, mediation, tools, classroom relationships, institutional norms, and social participation. Academic discourse, therefore, is not simply learned by memorizing structures; it is appropriated through guided participation in academic practices.

The following synthesis clarifies how academic discourse, sociolinguistic awareness, and intercultural communication contribute to English teacher education:

Table 3

Contributions of academic discourse, sociolinguistic awareness, and intercultural communication to english teacher education

Dimension	Main Focus	Relevance for English Teacher Education
Academic discourse	Genres, metadiscourse, stance, cohesion, argumentation, lexical bundles	Prepares teachers to guide learners in academic reading, writing, speaking, and research communication
Classroom discourse	Teacher talk, questions, feedback, interactional markers, participation	Helps future teachers reflect on how classroom language mediates learning
Sociolinguistic awareness	Variation, identity, multilingualism, language attitudes, digital English	Enables teachers to understand English as a global, diverse, and socially situated language

Intercultural communication	Cultural norms, politeness, misunderstanding, negotiation, accommodation	Prepares teachers and learners for communication across academic, professional, and cultural boundaries
English in higher education	EMI, internationalization, academic mobility, disciplinary communication	Connects English teaching with institutional and curricular demands in universities

Note. The table synthesizes the relationship between academic discourse, classroom discourse, sociolinguistic awareness, intercultural communication, and English teacher education.

The integration of these dimensions has direct implications for teacher education curricula. Courses for future English teachers should include academic discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, intercultural communication, classroom discourse, and digital language practices. These areas should not be treated as optional additions, but as essential components of professional preparation. Future teachers need to analyze authentic academic texts, examine classroom interaction, compare registers, identify stance markers, study language variation, and reflect on the social meanings of English. This preparation will allow them to teach English as a language of academic participation, not merely as a set of formal structures.

Assessment practices should also reflect discourse and sociolinguistic awareness. In writing, rubrics should evaluate coherence, argumentation, stance, genre awareness, and academic register. In speaking, they should include interactional competence, intelligibility, discourse organization, and audience awareness. In intercultural tasks, they should value interpretation, reflection, and communicative flexibility. Such assessment practices help learners understand that English proficiency is multidimensional and context-dependent.

Academic discourse, sociolinguistic awareness, and intercultural communication are essential foundations for English teacher education in higher education. They allow future teachers to understand English as a language of knowledge construction, classroom interaction, social identity, digital participation, and intercultural negotiation. Academic discourse analysis equips teachers to guide learners in the genres and rhetorical practices of university life. Sociolinguistic awareness helps them recognize variation, multilingualism, and the social meanings of English. Intercultural communication prepares them to teach language as a resource for respectful and effective interaction across differences. Together, these dimensions complete the linguistic foundation of

English teacher education by showing that English is not only a system to be learned, but a social, academic, and cultural practice to be understood, taught, and critically mediated.

Critical Discussion

The linguistic foundations discussed in this chapter reveal that English teacher education in higher education cannot be adequately sustained by methodological training alone. Although teaching strategies, classroom techniques, and instructional resources are indispensable, they become limited when they are not supported by a deep understanding of how language operates. The central critical issue is that many teacher education programs continue to separate linguistic knowledge from pedagogical practice, as if phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics belonged only to theoretical preparation, while teaching methods belonged to professional practice. This separation weakens teacher formation because it prevents future educators from interpreting learner difficulties with sufficient analytical depth.

One of the most relevant tensions identified throughout the chapter concerns the place of grammar and syntax in English teacher education. On the one hand, traditional grammar-centered approaches have often reduced language teaching to rule memorization, translation, mechanical correction, and decontextualized exercises. On the other hand, some communicative approaches have reacted against this tradition by minimizing explicit attention to form. Both extremes are problematic. The evidence reviewed suggests that learners in higher education and teacher trainees frequently experience persistent difficulties with grammatical awareness, sentence construction, vocabulary use, and academic writing. These difficulties cannot be resolved by returning to rigid prescriptive grammar, but neither can they be ignored in the name of fluency or communicative spontaneity. A more balanced position is needed: grammar and syntax should be taught as systems of meaning-making that support academic communication, written accuracy, and professional teacher competence.

A second point of critical reflection concerns the role of phonology in teacher education. Pronunciation is often treated as a secondary component, especially in EFL contexts where instruction tends to privilege grammar, reading, or written assessment. However, oral intelligibility, rhythm, stress, intonation, and prosody directly affect communication, listening comprehension, academic presentations, and learner confidence. The studies

reviewed on speaking difficulties and peer teaching suggest that oral performance is shaped not only by linguistic knowledge, but also by anxiety, confidence, classroom interaction, and opportunities for practice. Therefore, phonology should not be reduced to imitation of native-speaker pronunciation; it should be understood as a pedagogical dimension connected to intelligibility, identity, interaction, and affective support.

The chapter also shows that meaning construction represents one of the most complex challenges for English teacher education. Semantics and pragmatics demonstrate that communication cannot be explained only through vocabulary and grammar. Learners must understand how meaning changes across contexts, disciplines, cultures, genres, and interactions. In academic discourse, terms may acquire specialized meanings, ambiguity may become a resource for conceptual negotiation, and stance markers may indicate different degrees of certainty, caution, or authorial commitment. Likewise, pragmatic competence requires learners to interpret intentions, indirect meanings, politeness strategies, contextual expectations, and intercultural norms. This is particularly important because learners may produce grammatically correct utterances that fail communicatively or academically due to pragmatic inadequacy.

Another critical issue is the changing sociolinguistic status of English in higher education. English is no longer only a foreign language subject; it is also a medium of academic internationalization, digital participation, research communication, and intercultural exchange. The expansion of English-medium instruction and the rise of digital English practices demonstrate that future teachers must understand variation, multilingualism, identity, online registers, and English as a Lingua Franca. However, this transformation also raises risks. Institutions may promote English for internationalization without adequately supporting teachers and students. Digital English may enrich communicative repertoires, but it may also create tensions between informal online practices and formal academic expectations. Thus, English teacher education must prepare teachers to mediate between global English use, local linguistic realities, academic norms, and learner identities.

From this critical perspective, applied linguistics appears as the most appropriate framework for integrating these tensions. Its value lies in connecting theory, classroom practice, learner development, discourse, technology, culture, and curriculum. Nevertheless, applied linguistics should not be presented to future teachers as a collection

of isolated concepts. It must be taught as a reflective professional lens that helps teachers make informed decisions. The English teacher should be able to analyze learner errors, interpret discourse practices, understand pragmatic challenges, integrate technologies critically, and align linguistic knowledge with curricular goals. In this sense, the main challenge is not simply to include more linguistics in teacher education programs, but to transform linguistic knowledge into pedagogical reasoning.

Consequently, the linguistic foundation of English teacher education must be comprehensive, situated, and critically oriented. It should help future teachers understand that language is simultaneously structure, meaning, interaction, identity, discourse, and social practice. Only from this integrated perspective can English teachers respond to the academic, communicative, cultural, and technological demands of higher education. The chapter therefore supports a central argument: linguistic knowledge is not an accessory component of teacher education, but a condition for reflective, ethical, and effective English teaching.

III. CONCLUSIONES

The linguistic foundations examined throughout this chapter confirm that English teacher education in higher education must be understood as a comprehensive process in which language knowledge, pedagogical reasoning, academic communication, and sociocultural awareness are inseparably connected. The preparation of future English teachers cannot be limited to methodological training, communicative fluency, or the mechanical command of grammatical rules. Although these elements are necessary, they are not sufficient to form reflective professionals capable of interpreting learner needs, explaining language difficulties, designing meaningful instruction, assessing communicative performance, and participating in curriculum development. In this sense, linguistics becomes a structural component of teacher education because it provides the conceptual and analytical tools required to understand English as a system, as discourse, as social practice, and as a resource for academic and professional development.

One of the central conclusions of the chapter is that applied linguistics offers the most appropriate framework for articulating linguistic theory with English language teaching. Its relevance lies in the fact that it does not treat language as an abstract object detached from educational reality, but as a phenomenon that must be examined in relation to

learners, classrooms, institutions, cultures, technologies, and communicative purposes. Applied linguistics allows future teachers to understand that every pedagogical decision is based on an implicit or explicit theory of language. When teachers select materials, correct errors, organize interaction, teach pronunciation, explain grammar, evaluate writing, or promote intercultural communication, they are making decisions that require linguistic awareness. Therefore, the English teacher should be understood not only as an instructor, but also as an applied linguist who observes, interprets, mediates, and transforms language learning situations.

The chapter has also shown that phonology and syntax remain indispensable components of English teacher education. Phonological knowledge contributes to the development of oral intelligibility, listening comprehension, pronunciation, rhythm, stress, intonation, and confidence in spoken interaction. In EFL contexts, where exposure to authentic spoken English is often limited, the teacher becomes a key mediator of oral language development. For this reason, pronunciation should not be treated as a secondary or merely imitative skill, but as an essential dimension of communicative competence. Similarly, syntactic knowledge allows teachers to understand how English organizes meaning through phrases, clauses, sentence patterns, subordination, coordination, and grammatical relations. Syntax is especially important in higher education because academic writing requires sentence complexity, coherence, precision, and control of grammatical structures. Consequently, grammar instruction should not return to rigid memorization, but neither should it be excluded from communicative teaching. It must be reframed as a system for meaning-making and academic expression.

Another important conclusion is that semantics and pragmatics are fundamental for understanding how learners construct, interpret, and negotiate meaning. Vocabulary teaching cannot be reduced to memorizing isolated definitions or translations, since words acquire meaning through context, discipline, genre, collocation, and cultural use. Semantic awareness enables teachers to guide learners in the interpretation of lexical relations, ambiguity, conceptual meaning, and academic terminology. Pragmatic awareness, in turn, helps teachers explain how communication depends on intention, inference, politeness, stance, social distance, cultural expectations, and communicative purpose. A learner may produce grammatically correct sentences and still fail to communicate effectively if the utterance is pragmatically inappropriate or contextually unclear. For this reason, English

teacher education must include systematic attention to meaning in context, especially in academic, professional, intercultural, and digital communication.

The analysis of academic discourse, sociolinguistic awareness, and intercultural communication further expands the linguistic foundation of teacher education. English in higher education is not only a language subject; it is also a medium for reading scientific literature, writing academic texts, participating in seminars, preparing presentations, engaging in digital platforms, accessing international communities, and constructing professional identities. Therefore, future teachers must understand how academic discourse is organized through genres, metadiscourse, discourse markers, stance, cohesion, argumentation, and lexical bundles. At the same time, they must recognize that English is a global and diverse language shaped by multilingualism, digital interaction, identity, variation, and intercultural exchange. This awareness is essential for preparing learners to move between informal and formal registers, local and global contexts, and academic and professional spaces.

The chapter also highlights the need to integrate linguistic foundations with contemporary educational transformations. Digital technologies, blended learning, podcasts, artificial intelligence, online platforms, English-medium instruction, and global academic mobility have changed the conditions in which English is learned and taught. However, these transformations only become pedagogically valuable when they are guided by clear linguistic and educational purposes. Technology does not replace the teacher's linguistic judgment; rather, it requires teachers to make more informed decisions about input, interaction, feedback, autonomy, assessment, and learner engagement. In this sense, the linguistic formation of English teachers must include the capacity to evaluate technological tools critically and to use them in ways that strengthen language development.

Overall, the chapter concludes that the formation of English teachers in higher education must be based on an integrated linguistic model. Such a model should connect applied linguistics, phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, intercultural communication, and second language acquisition. These areas should not be presented as isolated theoretical subjects, but as interconnected dimensions of professional teacher knowledge. Their purpose is not only to explain language, but to support teaching practice, learner development, curriculum planning, academic literacy, and institutional

improvement. The future English teacher must be capable of understanding language deeply in order to teach it responsibly.

For this reason, the linguistic foundations developed in this chapter prepare the way for the next stage of the book: the analysis of strategies and practices for teaching English as a foreign language. Once the teacher understands how English functions as structure, meaning, discourse, and social practice, it becomes possible to design methodologies that respond to the real complexity of language learning. Thus, the transition from linguistic foundations to TEFL strategies is not a movement from theory to practice as separate domains, but a continuation of the same formative process. Effective English teaching begins with a profound understanding of language, and it becomes pedagogically meaningful when that understanding is transformed into reflective, contextualized, and human-centered educational practice.

CHAPTER II

*STRATEGIES AND
PRACTICES FOR
TEACHING ENGLISH
AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE*

CHAPTER II: STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in higher education requires a pedagogical perspective that connects linguistic knowledge with situated classroom practice. After establishing the linguistic foundations of English teacher education in the previous chapter, it is necessary to examine how such foundations are transformed into methodological decisions, instructional strategies, technological mediation, and assessment practices. In this sense, TEFL should not be understood as the mechanical application of isolated methods, but as a reflective, contextualized, and learner-centered field in which teachers make informed decisions according to students' needs, institutional conditions, communicative purposes, and curricular expectations.

Contemporary English language teaching has moved progressively away from rigid, teacher-centered, and grammar-dominant models toward approaches that emphasize interaction, autonomy, collaboration, critical thinking, authentic communication, and meaningful language use. This transformation responds to the limitations of traditional instruction, particularly when learners are expected to memorize structures without developing the ability to use English in academic, professional, intercultural, and digital environments. In this regard, studies on English language teaching methodologies recognize the transition from grammar-focused practices to communicative, task-based, technology-supported, and learner-centered approaches as a defining feature of contemporary ELT (Sharma, 2023).

In higher education, this methodological transition acquires particular relevance because adult learners bring different motivations, learning histories, cognitive maturity, professional expectations, and levels of linguistic preparation. They do not only need to learn vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or isolated communicative functions; they need to develop receptive and productive skills that allow them to read academic texts, understand oral input, participate in discussions, write coherent texts, present ideas, interact with peers, and use English as a tool for academic and professional development. Therefore, teaching English at this level requires strategies that integrate listening,

reading, speaking, and writing through meaningful tasks, guided practice, feedback, and opportunities for learner autonomy.

The reviewed corpus shows that contemporary TEFL practice is increasingly associated with methodologies such as Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, Project-Based Learning, cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, gamification, flipped classroom models, and technology-enhanced learning. These approaches share a common principle: learners should not remain passive recipients of linguistic information, but should participate actively in constructing meaning, solving problems, interacting with others, and using English for real or simulated communicative purposes. Lakew, Filatie, and Chanie (2025), for example, emphasize that innovative strategies such as cooperative learning, task-based learning, project-based learning, differentiated learning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and technology integration are central to effective EFL instruction, although their implementation still faces important contextual challenges.

Technology also plays a decisive role in contemporary TEFL practice. Digital platforms, mobile applications, learning management systems, online courses, podcasts, QR codes, gamified assessment tools, collaborative documents, and artificial intelligence-supported resources have expanded the possibilities for language exposure, interaction, feedback, and learner autonomy. However, technology should not be interpreted as a substitute for pedagogical reasoning. Its value depends on how it is integrated into instructional design, how it supports language objectives, how it promotes engagement, and how it responds to students' realities. Several studies on ICT in ELT indicate that digital tools can facilitate access to learning resources, collaborative activities, lesson preparation, flexible learning, and motivation, while also warning about barriers such as insufficient training, lack of confidence, limited access, infrastructure problems, and time constraints (Hashemi & Kew, 2021; Poudel, 2022; Fitria, 2023).

Assessment constitutes another central component of this chapter. In foreign language learning, evaluation should not be reduced to measuring final achievement or assigning grades. Rather, it should operate as a formative and competency-based process that provides evidence of communicative performance, linguistic development, self-regulation, collaboration, digital competence, and academic progress. Research on formative assessment in English language learning highlights the importance of feedback, self-

assessment, peer assessment, portfolios, strategic questioning, and learning-centered evaluation for increasing motivation and supporting student progress (Muho & Taraj, 2022). Similarly, blended and gamified formative assessment studies suggest that feedback-rich environments can strengthen engagement, motivation, internalization, and learner self-regulation (Ren et al., 2026; Zhang & Crawford, 2023).

Accordingly, this chapter develops four major sections. The first analyzes contemporary methodological principles for TEFL in higher education. The second examines the management of receptive and productive skills in adult learners. The third explores the use of technologies and interactive resources in teaching practice, with special attention to ICT, mobile learning, gamification, online courses, collaborative tools, and digital assessment. The fourth addresses competency-based assessment in foreign language learning. Through these sections, the chapter argues that effective TEFL practice requires methodological coherence, linguistic awareness, technological discernment, and formative evaluation aligned with the needs of contemporary higher education.

II. DEVELOPMENT

Contemporary Methodological Principles for Higher Education

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in higher education requires a methodological framework that is flexible, reflective, and responsive to the realities of adult learners. Contemporary TEFL can no longer be reduced to the application of a single method, nor can it depend exclusively on grammatical explanation, translation, memorization, or teacher-centered transmission. University students need to use English for academic reading, oral interaction, written production, professional communication, digital participation, and intercultural exchange. For this reason, English teaching at this level must be organized around methodological principles that promote meaningful communication, learner autonomy, collaborative work, cognitive engagement, contextualized practice, and continuous feedback.

The development of English language teaching has historically moved through different methodological stages. Traditional approaches, such as Grammar Translation, emphasized reading, translation, vocabulary memorization, and grammatical accuracy. Although these approaches contributed to formal knowledge of the language, they did not always prepare learners to communicate effectively. Later methods, such as the Direct

Method and Audio-Lingual Method, attempted to increase oral practice and habit formation, but they often remained limited by controlled repetition or rigid classroom procedures. More recent approaches, particularly Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, Project-Based Learning, cooperative learning, and post-method pedagogy, have expanded the understanding of English teaching by placing communication, context, learner agency, and meaningful language use at the center of instruction.

In this methodological evolution, one of the most relevant ideas is that no single method can respond adequately to all teaching contexts. Demirci and Yar (2024) explain that English language teaching has moved from method-based traditions toward a post-method perspective in which teachers are expected to make strategic, contextualized, and reflective decisions according to learners' needs, institutional conditions, and pedagogical goals. This view is particularly important for higher education because university classrooms are heterogeneous spaces. Students differ in proficiency level, motivation, disciplinary background, learning habits, technological access, academic expectations, and communicative needs. Therefore, the teacher's role is not to follow a method mechanically, but to select, adapt, combine, and evaluate strategies that respond to a specific learning situation.

From this perspective, contemporary TEFL is based on principled flexibility. The teacher must be able to identify when explicit instruction is necessary, when communicative practice is more appropriate, when collaborative tasks can support learning, when technology can enhance interaction, and when assessment should be used to guide improvement. This does not imply methodological improvisation. On the contrary, it requires pedagogical knowledge, linguistic awareness, curriculum understanding, and reflective judgment. A flexible teacher is not one who uses random activities, but one who understands the purpose of each strategy and aligns it with learning outcomes, student needs, and assessment criteria.

Communicative Language Teaching remains one of the strongest foundations of contemporary TEFL. Its main contribution is the recognition that language is learned through meaningful use, not only through knowledge about forms. In CLT, learners are encouraged to negotiate meaning, participate in interaction, express ideas, solve communicative problems, and use English for real or simulated purposes. Sharma (2023)

emphasizes that contemporary ELT has experienced a shift toward communicative methodologies, task-based learning, technology integration, learner autonomy, and authentic language use. This shift is especially relevant in higher education because adult learners need opportunities to use English in ways that resemble academic and professional communication: presenting arguments, discussing readings, writing reports, interacting in groups, and interpreting information critically.

However, CLT should not be misunderstood as simple conversation practice. Its effectiveness depends on careful planning, clear communicative goals, meaningful input, structured interaction, feedback, and opportunities for reflection. In university contexts, communicative activities must be academically purposeful. For example, instead of asking students to speak about random topics, teachers can organize debates on disciplinary issues, oral presentations based on readings, problem-solving tasks related to professional scenarios, interviews, simulations, peer explanations, and collaborative projects. In this way, communication becomes connected to academic development.

Task-Based Language Teaching is another central methodological principle for TEFL. TBLT organizes learning around tasks that require learners to use language to achieve a meaningful outcome. Unlike traditional exercises, tasks are not designed only to practice a grammatical structure; they require learners to understand information, make decisions, solve problems, negotiate meaning, and produce language with a communicative purpose. Liu (2024) reports that Task-Based Learning can improve EFL learners' speaking and listening performance, increase motivation, build confidence, and promote classroom participation. This evidence supports the idea that tasks can create learning environments where students use English actively rather than passively receiving explanations.

In higher education, task-based instruction can be especially useful because adult learners often respond positively to purposeful and relevant activities. A task may involve preparing an academic poster, solving a case study, designing a short survey, analyzing a video, presenting a professional proposal, preparing a role-play based on workplace communication, or producing a collaborative written product. These activities require the integration of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, discourse organization, and pragmatic competence. At the same time, they allow teachers to observe actual language use and provide feedback based on performance.

The effectiveness of TBLT is also visible in studies focused on specific skills. Sani and Emah (2025), for instance, found that students exposed to task-based instructional strategy achieved higher speaking performance than those taught through a discussion method, particularly in fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary. This finding is significant because speaking is often one of the most difficult skills for EFL learners, especially when traditional instruction emphasizes grammar over practical language use. Task-based instruction helps learners develop speaking because it gives them a reason to speak, a structure for participation, and a communicative goal that goes beyond repetition.

Task-based learning also has implications for vocabulary acquisition. Hamama and Brigui (2026), in a systematic review on TBLT and vocabulary acquisition, argue that task-based, contextualized, and strategy-oriented instruction improves vocabulary retention and meaningful use more effectively than isolated or rote-based methods. This contribution is important for adult learners because vocabulary in higher education is not only a matter of memorizing word lists. Learners need to use vocabulary in academic and professional contexts, connect new words with concepts, identify collocations, and apply lexical knowledge in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Task-based vocabulary learning allows words to be learned through use, context, and communicative need.

Project-Based Learning complements task-based instruction by extending language use into broader, sustained, and collaborative processes. PBL requires students to work over time on a project that involves inquiry, planning, decision-making, production, presentation, and reflection. In TEFL, PBL can support language development because it integrates multiple skills and connects English with real-world purposes. Alonso Álvarez (2026) highlights that Project-Based Learning in English teacher education can strengthen autonomy, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and holistic assessment. These elements are essential in higher education, where learners are expected to move beyond basic linguistic competence toward academic and professional agency.

A project in an English class may involve creating a digital magazine, designing an awareness campaign, preparing a research-based oral presentation, developing a podcast, producing instructional videos, organizing an intercultural fair, writing a literature review, or creating teaching materials. These projects require students to read, write, speak, listen, negotiate, revise, and present. They also promote learner responsibility because students must manage time, distribute roles, solve problems, and evaluate their

own progress. For future English teachers, PBL has an additional value: it models the type of student-centered methodology they may later apply in their own classrooms.

Cooperative learning is another contemporary principle that supports TEFL in higher education. It is based on the idea that learning is strengthened when students interact, explain ideas, support one another, negotiate meaning, and assume shared responsibility for outcomes. Cooperative learning differs from simple group work because it requires structured interdependence, individual accountability, interaction, and reflection. In EFL classrooms, cooperative learning can reduce anxiety, increase participation, and give learners more opportunities to use English. Prastiyowati et al. (2025) found that strategies such as CLT, TBLT, pronunciation practice, cross-linguistic transfer, and language games promoted interaction, collaboration, and student engagement in English learning. Although their study is situated in secondary education, its implications are applicable to higher education because adult learners also benefit from structured participation, peer support, and interactive tasks.

Cooperative learning is particularly valuable in EFL contexts where students may feel insecure about speaking. When interaction occurs only between teacher and student, learners may perceive communication as evaluative and intimidating. In contrast, pair work and group work can create more distributed opportunities for practice. Students can rehearse ideas, test language, clarify doubts, receive peer support, and gradually gain confidence. Nevertheless, cooperative learning must be carefully designed. Without clear roles and criteria, some students may dominate while others remain passive. Therefore, teachers must assign responsibilities, monitor interaction, provide language support, and assess both group outcomes and individual contributions.

Differentiated instruction is also necessary in higher education TEFL because adult learners rarely have homogeneous levels of proficiency. Some students may have strong reading skills but limited speaking confidence; others may understand grammar but struggle with listening; others may have digital competence but weak academic writing. Differentiated instruction responds to this diversity by adapting content, process, products, resources, grouping, and assessment according to learners' readiness, interests, and profiles. The purpose is not to create separate lessons for every student, but to offer varied pathways toward common learning goals.

The need for differentiated instruction is evident in studies that identify diverse learner needs, cultural considerations, linguistic variation, and socio-economic disparities as persistent challenges in ELT. Sharma (2023) argues that effective ELT practices include learner-centered instruction, differentiated strategies, authentic materials, formative assessment, supportive environments, cultural diversity, and communicative competence. In higher education, this means that teachers should combine whole-class instruction with individual tasks, pair work, digital resources, scaffolding, feedback, and extension activities. Differentiation also helps prevent exclusion, especially when students enter university with unequal educational backgrounds.

Another important methodological principle is active learning. Active learning refers to instructional practices that require learners to do more than listen to explanations. They must discuss, analyze, apply, create, reflect, evaluate, solve problems, and produce language. In TEFL, active learning is not only a general pedagogical trend; it is necessary because language develops through use. Students cannot become competent English users if they only receive information about the language. They need to manipulate language, interact with others, make errors, receive feedback, and revise their performance.

Active learning can be implemented through debates, simulations, case studies, peer teaching, problem-solving tasks, collaborative writing, reflective journals, digital projects, role-play, presentations, and learning stations. These strategies promote engagement because students become participants in the construction of learning. They also connect with adult learning principles, since adult learners tend to value relevance, autonomy, practical application, and purposeful activity. In the university classroom, active learning can transform English from an academic requirement into a tool for communication and intellectual participation.

Critical thinking is another essential principle in contemporary TEFL. English teaching should not be limited to linguistic fluency; it should also help learners interpret information, evaluate arguments, compare perspectives, justify opinions, solve problems, and reflect on their learning. Khamidova, Rozmetova, and Khakimova (2025) argue that integrating Project-Based Learning, flipped classroom techniques, translation activities, Bloom's revised taxonomy, reflective writing, peer assessment, oral tasks, and dynamic questioning can strengthen analytical reasoning, learner autonomy, evaluation, inference, and self-regulation in English instruction. Although their work focuses on secondary

students, the same principle is even more relevant in higher education, where English often serves as a medium for academic inquiry.

Critical thinking can be integrated into TEFL through reading analysis, discussion of controversial issues, comparison of sources, argumentative writing, research-based presentations, problem-solving projects, and reflective tasks. The teacher's role is to move students beyond literal comprehension and encourage interpretation, evaluation, and creation. This approach also connects language learning with disciplinary development. Students learn English not only to repeat information, but to think, argue, question, and communicate responsibly.

The flipped classroom is another methodological strategy that has gained relevance in higher education. In flipped learning, students engage with instructional content before class, usually through videos, readings, or online materials, while class time is used for interaction, practice, problem-solving, and feedback. Zhou (2020), in a study of task-based language instruction in flipped EFL classrooms in China, found that a fully flipped instructional design model improved reading comprehension and created better opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding through tasks not commonly used in traditional classrooms. This is important for TEFL because it shows how instructional design can reorganize classroom time. Instead of using most of the class for explanation, teachers can use face-to-face sessions for communicative practice and higher-order language tasks.

The flipped classroom is especially useful when combined with TBLT, PBL, and technology. Students can study vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or background content before class and then apply that knowledge in collaborative tasks. This model supports learner autonomy because students must prepare before participating. It also allows teachers to identify difficulties during class and provide more targeted feedback. However, flipped learning requires careful planning. If students do not complete pre-class work, in-class activities may be affected. Therefore, teachers need to design accessible materials, provide guiding questions, monitor preparation, and connect pre-class input clearly with classroom tasks.

Gamification has also become relevant in TEFL because it can increase motivation, engagement, and participation. Gamification does not mean turning all learning into

entertainment; rather, it involves using game elements such as points, challenges, levels, badges, competition, immediate feedback, and progress tracking to support learning goals. Zhang and Crawford (2023) found that gamified formative assessment through Quizizz enhanced EFL learners' motivation, engagement, internalization, and performance. This evidence suggests that gamification can be useful when it is connected to assessment for learning, not merely to competition.

In higher education, gamification should be used with academic purpose. It can support vocabulary review, grammar practice, listening comprehension, reading checks, peer challenges, formative quizzes, or collaborative problem-solving. Its main value lies in making feedback immediate and increasing learner participation. However, teachers must avoid reducing learning to superficial competition. Gamified activities should be inclusive, aligned with objectives, and designed to support reflection. Students should understand what they are learning, why they are practicing, and how the feedback helps them improve.

Finally, contemporary methodological principles require reflective teaching. A TEFL teacher in higher education must constantly examine whether strategies are working, whether students are participating, whether objectives are being achieved, whether assessment evidence is meaningful, and whether the classroom environment supports learning. Reflection is essential because methods do not function automatically. The same strategy may be effective in one context and ineffective in another. Lakew et al. (2025) show that even when innovative strategies are widely recommended, teachers may not implement them due to limited resources, low incentives, institutional leadership problems, lack of support, or professional discouragement. This finding reminds us that methodological innovation depends not only on teacher willingness, but also on institutional conditions.

Contemporary TEFL in higher education is grounded in methodological plurality, learner-centeredness, meaningful communication, task orientation, collaboration, differentiation, critical thinking, technology integration, and reflective practice. These principles do not function as isolated techniques; they form a pedagogical framework that allows teachers to design coherent learning experiences. The effective English teacher is not the one who follows a single method, but the one who understands learners, analyzes context, selects appropriate strategies, integrates skills, uses technology critically, and evaluates learning

formatively. In this way, TEFL becomes a professional practice where linguistic knowledge, pedagogical design, student engagement, and academic purpose converge.

Management of receptive and productive skills in adult learners

The teaching of English as a Foreign Language in higher education requires an integrated approach to receptive and productive skills. Listening, reading, speaking, and writing should not be understood as isolated areas of instruction, but as interdependent communicative processes that allow adult learners to access information, interpret academic content, interact with others, construct meaning, and produce discourse in oral and written forms. In university contexts, English learning is usually connected to professional development, academic performance, international communication, digital participation, and lifelong learning. For this reason, the management of language skills must respond to adult learners' cognitive maturity, previous educational experiences, affective needs, technological habits, and disciplinary expectations.

Adult learners generally bring more developed metacognitive capacities than younger learners, but they may also carry negative experiences, linguistic insecurity, fear of making mistakes, limited exposure to authentic English, or a tendency to depend on translation and memorization. TEFL practice at this level must therefore combine structure and autonomy. Teachers need to provide clear guidance, meaningful input, scaffolded practice, opportunities for interaction, and feedback that helps learners monitor their progress. This perspective coincides with the idea that contemporary ELT must move beyond rote learning and promote communicative, contextualized, learner-centered, and technology-supported instruction (Sharma, 2023).

Receptive skills, mainly listening and reading, are often considered passive because learners receive language rather than produce it. This view is limited. Listening and reading require active cognitive processing, prediction, inference, attention to form and meaning, activation of prior knowledge, interpretation of context, and evaluation of information. In higher education, receptive skills are essential because students must understand lectures, follow oral explanations, interpret audiovisual materials, read academic texts, analyze instructions, and access digital resources in English. A student who cannot process oral or written input effectively will struggle to participate in communicative tasks, produce coherent language, or engage in disciplinary learning.

Listening is especially demanding in EFL contexts because learners usually have limited contact with natural spoken English outside the classroom. They may be familiar with written vocabulary but fail to recognize it in connected speech. They may understand individual words but lose meaning when speakers use reduced forms, intonation, rhythm, different accents, or rapid delivery. This situation requires teachers to design listening activities that go beyond simple comprehension questions. Listening instruction should include pre-listening activation, exposure to varied accents, guided note-taking, prediction, repeated listening, identification of key words, recognition of discourse markers, and post-listening discussion. Digital tools such as podcasts, videos, mobile apps, and online platforms can increase exposure to oral input when they are selected according to clear linguistic goals.

The use of mobile-assisted language learning has become particularly relevant for receptive skill development. Jiang, Peters, Plonsky, and Pajak (2024) evaluated Duolingo English courses and found that learners who completed A2-level basic content achieved positive results in reading and listening proficiency through standardized testing. Their study is useful for TEFL in higher education because it shows that mobile learning can support receptive development when learners engage consistently with structured input and practice. The relevance of this evidence does not imply that mobile applications should replace instruction, but it does suggest that they can extend practice beyond classroom time and provide frequent exposure to English.

Reading, as another receptive skill, is central to academic development. Adult learners in higher education need to read instructions, articles, reports, professional texts, online sources, and discipline-related materials. Reading instruction should therefore move beyond literal comprehension and include vocabulary inference, recognition of text structure, identification of main ideas, analysis of argumentation, evaluation of sources, and synthesis of information. In EFL contexts, reading is also closely connected to vocabulary acquisition. Learners who lack lexical depth may decode words without understanding conceptual meaning, collocations, register, or academic use. For this reason, teachers should integrate reading with vocabulary strategies, semantic mapping, annotation, summarizing, paraphrasing, and discussion.

Vocabulary learning is a bridge between receptive and productive skills. Llamuca Auquilla (2023) emphasizes that vocabulary plays a crucial role in English language learning and

that digital resources, such as Quick Response Codes, can support vocabulary acquisition by allowing learners to access online materials quickly, visually, and interactively. This contribution is especially relevant for adult learners because vocabulary growth requires repeated exposure, contextualized use, and multimodal reinforcement. QR codes, mobile links, digital flashcards, glossaries, and multimedia resources can connect printed activities with videos, audio, images, examples, and practice tasks, making vocabulary learning more accessible and interactive.

Reading and listening should also prepare learners for production. Input becomes pedagogically meaningful when students use it to speak, write, discuss, summarize, question, or create. For example, a listening activity based on a podcast can lead to a group discussion, an oral reflection, a vocabulary map, or a short written response. A reading activity based on an academic text can lead to a summary, a debate, a presentation, or an argumentative paragraph. This connection between receptive and productive skills supports integrated language development because learners first process models of language and then use them to produce meaning.

Speaking is one of the most challenging productive skills for adult EFL learners. Oral production exposes pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary limitations, grammatical insecurity, hesitation, and anxiety. Many learners understand English better than they can speak it, which creates frustration and avoidance. Zulfikar (2023) shows that speaking anxiety in EFL contexts can be addressed through selective error correction and group work, since these strategies reduce fear, increase participation, and create a more supportive communicative environment. This finding is important because adult learners often need emotional safety before they can take communicative risks.

Speaking instruction should balance fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, interaction, and discourse management. If teachers focus only on accuracy, learners may become afraid of speaking. If they focus only on fluency, learners may fossilize errors or lack control over academic expression. A balanced approach includes guided practice, meaningful repetition, pronunciation support, interactional routines, peer collaboration, role-play, presentations, interviews, simulations, problem-solving tasks, and reflective feedback. The purpose is not to force learners to speak perfectly, but to help them communicate with increasing clarity, confidence, and appropriateness.

Pronunciation deserves special attention in adult speaking development. Villablanca Agurto (2023) argues that pronunciation instruction should not be limited to native-like imitation, since contemporary English communication requires attention to intelligibility, segmental and suprasegmental features, teacher cognition, and the global role of English. This perspective is relevant for TEFL because adult learners may feel discouraged if they believe successful pronunciation means sounding like a native speaker. A more pedagogically appropriate goal is intelligible, comprehensible, and contextually effective speech. Teachers should help learners work on sounds, stress, rhythm, intonation, connected speech, and oral clarity while respecting accent variation and learner identity.

Positive reinforcement is also significant in oral skill development. Salao Espinoza (2022) highlights that reinforcement strategies can support speaking skills by addressing grammatical resources, lexical resources, pronunciation, interactive communication, and discourse management. This approach is valuable for adult learners because feedback should not only identify errors; it should also recognize progress, encourage participation, and provide clear direction for improvement. Oral feedback should be specific, respectful, and linked to communicative goals. A teacher may comment on clarity of ideas, use of vocabulary, pronunciation of key terms, organization of discourse, interaction with peers, or ability to sustain communication.

Writing, as a productive skill, is particularly important in higher education because students are expected to produce academic and professional texts. Writing in English requires grammatical control, lexical precision, coherence, cohesion, genre awareness, argumentation, and revision. Adult learners often need explicit guidance to move from sentence-level production to paragraph-level and text-level organization. Writing instruction should therefore be process-oriented. Students need to plan, draft, receive feedback, revise, edit, and reflect on their choices. Collaborative writing, peer review, digital documents, portfolios, and rubrics can help students understand writing as development rather than as a single final product.

Writing instruction should also be connected to reading. Academic writing improves when learners analyze models, identify discourse organization, notice connectors, examine stance, compare paragraphs, and observe how writers introduce claims, evidence, and interpretations. Teachers can guide students to transform reading input into written output through summaries, responses, synthesis paragraphs, annotated bibliographies, reflective

journals, and short research-based texts. Such activities help learners use English to process information and construct academic meaning.

The integration of receptive and productive skills is essential in adult TEFL because real communication rarely separates listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In academic and professional contexts, learners may read a text, discuss it orally, write a response, listen to feedback, revise their ideas, and present them publicly. A class organized around integrated skills better reflects this reality. Task-Based Language Teaching and Project-Based Learning are especially useful for this purpose because they require students to combine skills to complete meaningful outcomes. Liu (2024) reports that Task-Based Learning supports speaking and listening development while increasing motivation and confidence. Sani and Emah (2025) also found that task-based instructional strategies improved students' speaking performance in fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary.

Adult learners benefit from tasks that simulate real-world or academic situations. A task may begin with listening to a short lecture, reading a related text, discussing the topic in groups, and producing a written or oral response. Another task may require students to read professional information, prepare a role-play, negotiate a solution, and present recommendations. These integrated tasks help learners understand that English is not a collection of separate skills, but a communicative system used to interpret, interact, and produce meaning.

Technology can support integrated skills when it is pedagogically designed. Online courses, mobile apps, QR codes, podcasts, videos, collaborative documents, forums, learning management systems, and gamified tools can provide input, practice, feedback, and production spaces. Shlenova (2025) explains that online courses can integrate language competence and digital competence through multimedia resources, interactive scenarios, LMS platforms, gamification, and formative assessment tools. This idea is important for higher education because adult learners increasingly need to use English and digital tools simultaneously. Language learning becomes more relevant when it supports academic communication, digital literacy, autonomy, and professional participation.

Teachers must also consider learner autonomy. Adult students often have responsibilities outside the classroom and may need flexible opportunities to continue learning

independently. Autonomous learning can be encouraged through listening logs, vocabulary notebooks, reading journals, digital portfolios, self-assessment checklists, mobile practice, and reflective tasks. Autonomy does not mean leaving students alone; it means equipping them with strategies to plan, monitor, and evaluate their progress. Formative assessment and feedback are central to this process because they help learners understand where they are, what they need to improve, and how to proceed. The following table organizes the management of receptive and productive skills in adult EFL learners according to pedagogical focus, strategies, learner needs, and assessment evidence.

Table 4

Management of receptive and productive skills in adult efl learners

Skill dimension	Pedagogical focus	Recommended TEFL strategies	Adult learner needs	Assessment evidence
Listening	Comprehension of oral input, accents, rhythm, intonation, and meaning	Podcasts, videos, guided listening, repeated listening, note-taking, dictogloss, mobile applications	Exposure, repetition, confidence, authentic input, and listening strategies	Listening logs, comprehension tasks, oral responses, note-taking products
Reading	Academic, functional, and digital text comprehension	Skimming, scanning, vocabulary inference, annotation, extensive reading, guided academic reading	Autonomy, academic vocabulary, disciplinary texts, and comprehension strategies	Reading journals, summaries, quizzes, annotations, synthesis tasks
Speaking	Fluency, pronunciation, interaction, intelligibility, and discourse management	Group work, role-play, task-based speaking, oral presentations, selective correction, positive reinforcement	Low anxiety, feedback, interaction, confidence, and communicative purpose	Speaking rubrics, oral presentations, peer assessment, recorded tasks
Writing	Accuracy, coherence, cohesion, genre awareness, and academic expression	Process writing, collaborative writing, portfolios, Google Docs, peer review, guided revision	Feedback, planning, revision, academic structure, and lexical precision	Drafts, portfolios, analytic rubrics, self-assessment, revised texts
Integrated skills	Connection between input, interaction, production, and reflection	TBLT, PBL, simulations, debates, podcasts, digital projects, problem-solving tasks	Relevance, autonomy, collaboration, authentic use, and transfer to academic contexts	Projects, presentations, reflective reports, multimodal products

Note. *The table synthesizes pedagogical strategies for managing receptive and productive skills in adult EFL learners, emphasizing the relationship among language input, communicative production, learner needs, and assessment evidence.*

The table shows that language skill management requires coherence among objectives, strategies, learner needs, and assessment. Listening and reading provide input, but they must be connected to interpretation and production. Speaking and writing provide evidence of communicative development, but they require scaffolding, feedback, and emotional support. Integrated skills tasks allow teachers to connect classroom practice with academic and professional uses of English. This organization is especially useful in higher education because adult learners need to understand not only what they are practicing, but why that practice matters for their development.

Skill integration also requires careful sequencing. Teachers can begin with input, move toward guided analysis, then promote interaction, and later ask learners to produce a spoken or written outcome. For example, a lesson on environmental issues may begin with a short video, continue with vocabulary analysis, move to a reading text, then group discussion, and end with a written opinion paragraph or oral presentation. This sequence allows learners to build knowledge gradually and use English with increasing complexity.

Feedback should accompany every stage of skill development. In listening and reading, feedback can help learners identify comprehension strategies, vocabulary gaps, and interpretation difficulties. In speaking, feedback should address fluency, pronunciation, interaction, and clarity without discouraging participation. In writing, feedback should guide revision, organization, lexical precision, and academic coherence. Feedback becomes most effective when learners understand it and use it to improve subsequent performance.

The management of receptive and productive skills also requires teachers to recognize the affective dimension of adult learning. Many adults fear public error, especially in oral communication. Others may feel insecure about writing because they compare themselves with more proficient peers. Teachers must therefore create a classroom climate where mistakes are treated as part of learning. Supportive interaction, peer collaboration, positive reinforcement, and formative feedback help students participate more actively.

Skill development in TEFL is not a linear process. Learners may progress in reading while still struggling with speaking; they may write accurately but listen with difficulty; they may understand academic vocabulary but hesitate to use it orally. Teachers need to observe these uneven patterns and provide differentiated support. This requires diagnostic

assessment, flexible grouping, varied materials, and opportunities for individualized practice. Adult learners benefit when instruction recognizes their existing strengths and provides targeted pathways for improvement.

The management of receptive and productive skills in adult learners must be understood as a dynamic pedagogical process. Listening, reading, speaking, and writing are not separate compartments but mutually reinforcing dimensions of communicative competence. In higher education, their development must be connected to academic literacy, professional communication, digital participation, and learner autonomy. Effective TEFL practice requires teachers to design tasks where input leads to interaction, interaction leads to production, and production leads to reflection and improvement. This approach prepares learners to use English not only inside the classroom, but also in the academic, professional, and intercultural contexts where the language becomes meaningful.

The use of technologies and interactive resources in teaching practice

The integration of technologies and interactive resources in TEFL practice has become one of the most relevant transformations in contemporary English language education. In higher education, technology is no longer an external supplement to classroom instruction; it is part of the learning ecology through which students access input, interact with content, collaborate with peers, receive feedback, produce multimodal texts, and develop autonomy. For English as a Foreign Language learners, especially in contexts where exposure to authentic English is limited, digital tools can extend the classroom beyond physical time and space. They provide access to videos, podcasts, mobile applications, online dictionaries, learning management systems, collaborative platforms, gamified assessment tools, digital coursebooks, corpora, artificial intelligence resources, and interactive materials that diversify the ways in which English is encountered and practiced.

The pedagogical value of technology, however, does not depend on its mere presence in the classroom. Technology becomes meaningful when it is intentionally connected to language objectives, learner needs, task design, assessment criteria, feedback, and opportunities for communication. Several studies in the corpus warn against interpreting digital innovation as automatic improvement. Hashemi and Kew (2021), for example,

identify lack of teacher confidence, lack of effective training, and lack of time as recurrent barriers to ICT use in English language teaching. This means that the use of technology requires not only devices and internet access, but also teacher preparation, institutional support, pedagogical clarity, and a critical understanding of how tools mediate language learning.

In TEFL, the first contribution of technology is access to multimodal input. Traditional classrooms often depend on the teacher's voice, printed textbooks, and limited audiovisual materials. Digital environments expand the types of input available to learners by incorporating audio, video, images, subtitles, animations, interactive readings, pronunciation models, mobile exercises, online lectures, and authentic materials. This is especially relevant for listening and pronunciation development because learners can listen repeatedly to different speakers, accents, rhythms, and communicative situations. It is also relevant for reading and vocabulary development because learners can access glossaries, hyperlinks, images, examples, and corpora that help them interpret meaning in context.

Poudel (2022) shows that ICTs in higher education English language teaching were useful for accessing learning resources, preparing and presenting lessons, and conducting collaborative learning activities, although participants still reported limitations related to access and digital skills. This finding is important because it avoids an overly optimistic interpretation of technology. ICT can support language learning, but its effectiveness depends on whether teachers and students can use it with confidence, purpose, and continuity. In developing and emerging higher education contexts, technological integration must therefore be planned with sensitivity to infrastructure, training, and equity.

Mobile-assisted language learning has become one of the most visible forms of digital TEFL practice. Smartphones and tablets allow learners to study vocabulary, listen to audio, complete quizzes, read short texts, record oral production, scan QR codes, and practice language outside the classroom. Jiang et al. (2024) evaluated Duolingo English courses and found that learners who completed basic A2 content achieved positive results in reading and listening proficiency when measured through standardized assessment. Their work supports the idea that mobile applications can contribute to receptive skill development when learners engage with structured, repeated, and accessible practice.

Mobile learning is particularly useful for adult learners because it allows flexible study routines, short practice sessions, and independent reinforcement.

The use of mobile tools also supports vocabulary acquisition. Llamuca Auquilla (2023) proposes the use of Quick Response Codes as a technological strategy for vocabulary acquisition at A1 level, emphasizing that QR codes allow students to access online resources quickly and connect classroom activities with visual, audio, and interactive materials. Although the study focuses on beginner learners, the principle can be extended to higher education TEFL. QR codes can be used to link printed handouts to pronunciation models, videos, glossaries, reading extensions, quizzes, collaborative forms, or digital portfolios. This integration is pedagogically valuable because it connects analog and digital materials without replacing the teacher's mediation.

Online courses are another important resource for language and digital competence. Shlenova (2025) argues that online courses can integrate language proficiency and digital literacy through multimedia integration, interactive learning scenarios, LMS platforms, gamification elements, formative assessment, teacher support, inclusive design, and ethical use of digital resources. This perspective is relevant for TEFL because English teachers in higher education must increasingly prepare learners not only to communicate in English, but also to participate in digital academic environments. Online courses can promote self-paced learning, autonomy, academic communication, and digital competence when they are designed with clear methodological principles.

Learning management systems provide a structured environment for organizing TEFL practice. Platforms such as Moodle, Blackboard, Google Classroom, Canvas, and institutional LMS systems can host readings, videos, quizzes, forums, assignments, rubrics, feedback, grades, announcements, and learning analytics. Their value lies in creating continuity between face-to-face and independent learning. A teacher can use an LMS to prepare students before class, extend practice after class, provide individualized feedback, monitor participation, and collect evidence of progress. This supports blended learning, where online and offline components are not separate, but mutually reinforcing.

The use of blended learning is especially relevant in higher education because it responds to adult learners' need for flexibility and structured autonomy. Ren, Zhang, and Cao (2026) describe blended foreign language learning as a context where formative

assessment, SPOC analytics, periodic checkpoints, reflective journals, and peer interaction can create a feedback ecology that strengthens motivation, strategy use, reflective regulation, and sustainable learning. Their study, although focused on Japanese as a foreign language, provides transferable implications for TEFL because it shows how digital platforms can support self-regulated learning when assessment and feedback are embedded throughout the process.

Digital collaboration tools also play a significant role in TEFL practice. Google Docs, Google Slides, Microsoft Teams, forums, shared whiteboards, Padlet, blogs, wikis, and collaborative presentation platforms allow learners to produce language together, edit texts, negotiate meaning, comment on peer work, and construct shared products. Díez-Arcón and Martín-Monje (2023) examined computer-mediated collaborative learning and digital peer assessment in a TEFL course with student-teachers, finding positive satisfaction levels and differences in performance between users and non-users of Microsoft Teams-based collaborative work. This evidence is important for teacher education because it connects digital tools with collaborative learning, peer assessment, and professional preparation.

Peer assessment in digital environments adds another layer of learning. When learners evaluate peer work using clear criteria, they develop awareness of quality, accuracy, coherence, pronunciation, fluency, organization, and communicative effectiveness. Digital peer assessment can be applied to written drafts, oral recordings, presentations, videos, projects, and collaborative tasks. It also promotes learner autonomy because students begin to understand assessment standards and apply them to their own performance. The teacher remains essential in this process, since peer assessment requires training, rubrics, respectful feedback protocols, and monitoring.

Gamification has become another influential technological strategy in TEFL. It uses elements such as points, levels, badges, leaderboards, challenges, immediate feedback, and progress indicators to increase engagement and motivation. Zhang and Crawford (2023) studied gamified formative assessment through Quizizz and found that it enhanced EFL learners' motivation, internalization, engagement, and performance. Their findings suggest that gamification can be pedagogically useful when it is connected to assessment for learning. The strongest contribution of tools such as Quizizz is not entertainment

alone, but immediate feedback, repeated practice, low-stakes participation, and visible progress.

Gamified formative assessment can be used for vocabulary review, grammar practice, listening checks, reading comprehension, pronunciation recognition, and concept reinforcement. It can also reduce the emotional pressure of traditional testing because students interact with assessment in a dynamic environment. Yet, teachers must avoid reducing learning to competition or speed. In adult higher education contexts, gamification should be aligned with objectives, inclusive for different proficiency levels, and followed by reflection. Students should be able to review errors, identify patterns, and connect feedback with future improvement.

Artificial intelligence and corpus-informed tools introduce another important area of technological practice. Khanh Ly (2026) argues that AI-supported and corpus-informed tools can enhance linguistic evaluation of ELT coursebooks by analyzing lexical, grammatical, and discourse features, while emphasizing that these tools should support expert judgment rather than replace it. This argument is valuable for TEFL because AI can assist teachers in analyzing materials, generating examples, adapting texts, designing quizzes, checking readability, identifying vocabulary levels, and supporting feedback. The teacher's critical role remains central because AI output must be interpreted through linguistic theory, pedagogical purpose, and contextual relevance.

AI-supported teaching practice should be guided by ethical and pedagogical criteria. Teachers can use AI to generate differentiated reading tasks, create vocabulary exercises, provide writing prompts, design role-play situations, summarize texts, or develop rubrics. Students can use AI to brainstorm, practice dialogue, receive language suggestions, or compare versions of a text. These uses require guidance on academic integrity, citation, responsible use, bias, accuracy, and privacy. TEFL teacher education should therefore include AI literacy as part of digital pedagogical competence.

ICT-based teaching tools include a wide range of devices and platforms. Shah (2025), in a review of ICT-based teaching-learning tools in ELT, identifies computers, tablets, digital recorders, interactive whiteboards, radio, television, internet resources, email, YouTube, e-books, blogs, PowerPoint, social media, Wikipedia, Google Docs, LMS platforms, hardware, software, and web-based platforms as resources that can enrich English

teaching. The relevance of this inventory is not that every tool should be used, but that teachers need to select resources according to purpose. A podcast may support listening; Google Docs may support collaborative writing; YouTube may provide authentic input; Quizizz may support formative review; QR codes may connect classroom tasks with digital resources.

Fitria (2023) organizes the opportunities and challenges of ICT in ELT by emphasizing that technology can improve educational quality, encourage new methods, provide access to resources, support flexibility, motivate students, and enable interesting learning media, while also creating challenges such as distractions, costs, reduced social interaction, dependence on technology, lack of teacher confidence, limited competence, inadequate access, infrastructure problems, and insufficient technical support. This dual perspective is essential because TEFL must avoid both technophilia and technophobia. Technology is neither a miracle solution nor a threat in itself; it is a pedagogical mediator whose effect depends on design, access, training, and use.

Harezaki (2024), in a study of ICT integration in private higher education institutions, reports that teachers demonstrate varied levels of preparation and that some educators show reluctance or limited confidence toward ICT integration, even when they recognize its potential value. The study also highlights the importance of teacher education programs that prepare future English teachers for technological integration in real teaching contexts. This is relevant because digital competence cannot be assumed. Teachers may use technology in daily life but still lack the pedagogical knowledge needed to integrate it into TEFL.

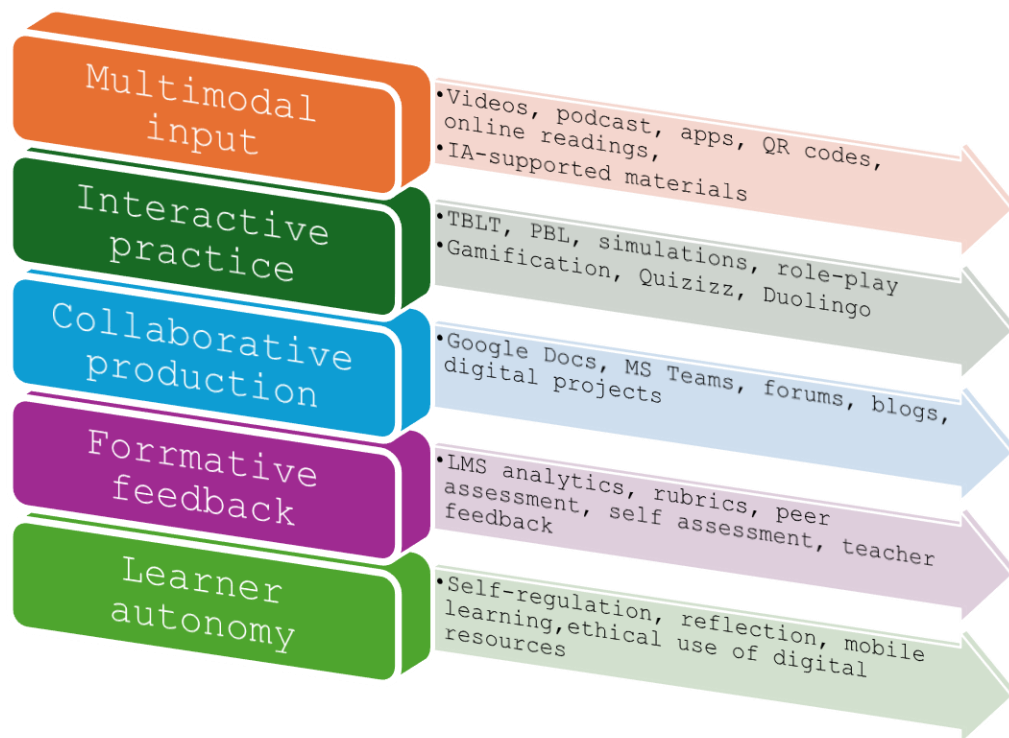
The relationship between technology and teacher identity is also important. English teachers are no longer expected only to explain grammar, manage classroom interaction, and evaluate written or oral production. They are also expected to curate digital resources, design blended learning experiences, guide students in online communication, use digital assessment tools, and promote ethical digital practices. This expanded role requires professional development. Teacher education programs should include experiences with LMS design, digital materials creation, online feedback, AI-supported resources, collaborative platforms, and formative assessment technologies.

The design of technological integration should follow a clear pedagogical sequence. A teacher might begin by identifying the language objective, selecting the skill focus, choosing an appropriate tool, designing a task, preparing scaffolding, implementing feedback, and collecting assessment evidence. For example, if the objective is to improve academic vocabulary, the teacher may select an academic text, prepare QR codes linked to definitions and examples, use a collaborative glossary in Google Docs, practice vocabulary through Quizizz, and assess use of vocabulary in a short written paragraph. The technology supports the process, but the pedagogical sequence gives it coherence.

A similar sequence can be used for speaking. The teacher may provide a video model, guide students to identify discourse markers, organize pair practice in class, ask students to record short presentations, use peer feedback through a rubric, and provide teacher comments on pronunciation and organization. Technology allows recording, sharing, reviewing, and feedback, but the communicative purpose remains central. The same principle applies to listening, reading, writing, grammar, and pronunciation.

Figure 2

Interactive Digital Ecosystem for TEFL Practice in Higher Education



Note. *The figure represents technology integration in TEFL as an interactive ecosystem in which multimodal input, interactive practice, collaborative production, formative feedback, and learner autonomy operate as interconnected components of digital pedagogical mediation.*

The figure presents digital TEFL practice as an ecosystem rather than as a list of tools. This distinction is important because technology integration requires relationships among input, practice, production, feedback, and autonomy. A tool has limited value if it is not connected to the rest of the learning process. A video becomes pedagogical when learners analyze it, discuss it, extract vocabulary, imitate pronunciation, or use it as a model for production. A quiz becomes formative when learners receive feedback and act on it. A collaborative document becomes meaningful when students negotiate language, revise ideas, and reflect on their writing.

The model also emphasizes inclusion and competency-based learning. Digital TEFL practice should not privilege only technologically skilled students. It should provide varied access routes, clear instructions, scaffolding, and support. It should also connect with competencies such as communicative competence, digital competence, collaborative competence, academic literacy, and self-regulation. This approach aligns with the contemporary need to teach English not only as a linguistic subject, but as a tool for academic participation, professional development, and digital citizenship.

Technology integration must be accompanied by critical material evaluation. Digital resources vary in quality, accuracy, level, cultural representation, linguistic authenticity, and pedagogical usefulness. Teachers need to evaluate whether a video is appropriate for the objective, whether an app provides meaningful practice, whether AI-generated content is accurate, whether a text matches learners' level, and whether a platform supports interaction rather than passive consumption. Khanh Ly's (2026) argument that AI-supported tools should function as analytical support rather than autonomous evaluators can also be applied to digital teaching resources more broadly. Teachers remain responsible for interpreting, adapting, and contextualizing materials.

Digital resources also make it possible to personalize learning. Learners can repeat listening activities, choose reading levels, practice vocabulary at their own pace, receive instant feedback, and access extension materials according to their needs. Personalization

is especially valuable in higher education classrooms with heterogeneous proficiency levels. Yet personalization should not lead to isolation. TEFL is communicative by nature, and technology should support interaction, not replace it. A balanced design combines individual practice with collaborative production and teacher mediation.

The role of feedback is central in technology-enhanced TEFL. Digital platforms can provide immediate scores, automated comments, analytics, peer responses, and revision histories. These resources help teachers and students identify progress and difficulties. However, automated feedback must be interpreted carefully. A platform may indicate whether an answer is correct, but it may not explain why a learner misunderstood the item, how the error relates to interlanguage development, or what strategy should be used next. Teacher feedback remains necessary to humanize and contextualize assessment.

Technological practice also supports reflective learning. Students can maintain digital portfolios, record oral tasks over time, compare drafts, track vocabulary progress, and write reflections on their learning strategies. These practices promote metacognition because learners become aware of how they learn, what they need, and how they improve. This is especially relevant for adult learners, whose success often depends on self-regulation and sustained practice beyond classroom hours.

The integration of interactive resources has implications for teacher education. Future English teachers need to experience technology as learners and as designers. They should not only use digital tools, but also analyze their pedagogical affordances, limitations, and ethical implications. They need opportunities to design digital lessons, create multimodal materials, use rubrics in online environments, organize collaborative tasks, evaluate AI-supported resources, and reflect on inclusion. This preparation will allow them to avoid superficial technology use and develop a professional approach to digital TEFL.

The strongest pedagogical contribution of technology in TEFL lies in its capacity to expand, diversify, and connect learning experiences. It can increase exposure to English, support flexible practice, promote collaboration, provide immediate feedback, motivate learners, document progress, and strengthen autonomy. These possibilities become academically meaningful when guided by teacher expertise, institutional support, linguistic objectives, and ethical awareness. Technology in TEFL should therefore be

understood as a mediated practice: it enhances learning when it is designed to serve communication, reflection, assessment, and human interaction.

Competency-based assessment in foreign language learning

Competency-based assessment in foreign language learning requires a shift from evaluating what students remember about English to examining what they are able to do with English in meaningful, academic, professional, and social situations. In TEFL, assessment should not be limited to isolated grammar tests, vocabulary quizzes, or final examinations that measure achievement only at the end of a unit or course. Although these instruments may provide useful information about specific aspects of learning, they are insufficient to evaluate communicative competence, interactional ability, academic literacy, digital participation, self-regulation, and collaborative performance. A competency-based perspective understands assessment as a process that gathers evidence of how learners use language to comprehend, interact, produce, mediate, reflect, and improve.

The relevance of competency-based assessment is especially clear in higher education, where English learning is often connected to broader academic and professional outcomes. University students are expected to read specialized texts, write coherent academic documents, understand oral input, participate in discussions, prepare presentations, collaborate in projects, use digital platforms, and communicate across cultural and disciplinary contexts. These performances cannot be evaluated adequately through traditional testing alone. They require assessment strategies that are authentic, formative, criterion-referenced, multidimensional, and aligned with learning outcomes.

Formative assessment is one of the most important foundations of competency-based evaluation in TEFL. Unlike summative assessment, which usually certifies achievement at the end of a learning period, formative assessment supports learning while it is taking place. It provides information that helps teachers adjust instruction and helps students identify their strengths, weaknesses, and next steps. Chen and Li (2021), in a meta-analysis on formative assessment in EFL education in China, found a medium-sized positive effect of formative assessment on students' EFL learning achievement, with stronger effects in vocabulary and spoken language achievement than in some other skill

areas. This finding suggests that assessment can become a pedagogical instrument rather than a mere measurement event.

The formative function of assessment is particularly important in language learning because language development is gradual, recursive, and uneven. Learners may improve in vocabulary while still struggling with pronunciation, or they may develop reading comprehension before gaining oral confidence. A single final test cannot capture this complexity. Formative assessment allows teachers to observe progress over time through tasks, drafts, performances, reflections, portfolios, peer feedback, self-assessment, and classroom interaction. It also allows learners to understand their development as a process rather than as a fixed result.

Muho and Taraj (2022) emphasize that formative assessment practices such as strategic questioning, portfolios, self-assessment, and peer assessment positively influence students' motivation for learning English. Their study is relevant because motivation is a key condition for language learning. When assessment only produces grades, learners may become anxious, passive, or focused on avoiding failure. When assessment provides feedback, participation, reflection, and opportunities for improvement, learners are more likely to perceive evaluation as part of learning. This change is central to competency-based TEFL because competencies are developed through practice, feedback, revision, and transfer.

Strategic questioning is one of the simplest and most powerful formative assessment strategies. Through questions, teachers can identify comprehension, provoke reflection, check vocabulary use, guide interpretation, and stimulate oral participation. In an EFL classroom, strategic questions may help students clarify meaning, justify opinions, compare ideas, infer information, evaluate arguments, or connect language forms with communicative purposes. Unlike questions used only to test recall, formative questioning opens spaces for thinking and language use. It allows teachers to diagnose understanding and provide immediate support.

Portfolios are also highly compatible with competency-based assessment. A portfolio collects evidence of learning over time and allows students to demonstrate progress through drafts, written tasks, oral recordings, reading reflections, vocabulary logs, projects, peer feedback, self-assessment forms, and revised products. In TEFL, portfolios

are valuable because they show development, not only final performance. They allow teachers to evaluate process, effort, revision, autonomy, and competence integration. They also encourage learners to reflect on their own progress, identify recurring errors, and recognize improvement.

Self-assessment is another essential strategy because competency-based learning requires learners to understand standards and monitor their own performance. In foreign language learning, students need to become aware of what they can do with the language, what they still need to improve, and which strategies help them learn. Self-assessment can be implemented through checklists, reflection guides, learning logs, can-do statements, goal-setting forms, oral performance reviews, and portfolio reflections. When students assess themselves using clear criteria, they develop metacognitive awareness and become more responsible for their learning.

Peer assessment complements self-assessment by allowing learners to observe and evaluate the performance of others. Díez-Arcón and Martín-Monje (2023) show that digital peer assessment and computer-mediated collaborative learning can support language teacher development in TEFL contexts, especially when students work collaboratively and evaluate each other through digital tools. In language learning, peer assessment is useful because students learn not only from receiving feedback, but also from giving it. When they evaluate a peer's presentation, text, pronunciation, or project, they become more aware of criteria such as clarity, coherence, accuracy, interaction, organization, and audience awareness.

Teacher feedback remains central in competency-based assessment. Feedback should be specific, timely, understandable, and actionable. General comments such as "good job" or "improve grammar" are insufficient because they do not guide learning. Effective feedback identifies what was achieved, what needs improvement, and how the learner can proceed. In speaking, feedback may focus on intelligibility, fluency, vocabulary range, interaction, pronunciation of key terms, or discourse organization. In writing, it may address thesis clarity, paragraph structure, coherence, grammar patterns, lexical precision, citation, or genre awareness. In listening and reading, it may help learners identify strategies, comprehension gaps, or vocabulary difficulties.

Feedback must also be emotionally responsible. Adult EFL learners may experience anxiety when their errors are publicly exposed. Assessment practices that humiliate, compare, or punish learners can reduce participation and reinforce silence. Formative feedback should preserve learner dignity while promoting improvement. Zulfikar's (2023) findings on speaking anxiety and selective correction are useful here because they suggest that feedback in oral communication should be purposeful and supportive rather than excessive or interruptive. Competency-based assessment values communicative growth, which requires an environment where learners can take risks.

Assessment by competencies also demands constructive alignment. Learning outcomes, teaching strategies, tasks, and assessment instruments must correspond to one another. If a course outcome states that students will be able to participate in academic discussions, then assessment should include discussion tasks, interaction rubrics, peer feedback, and evidence of oral participation. If the outcome states that students will write academic paragraphs, then assessment should include drafts, revision, rubrics, and writing portfolios. A mismatch occurs when communicative or academic competencies are declared in the syllabus, but only grammar tests are used to evaluate learning.

Project-Based Learning offers a strong context for competency-based assessment because projects integrate linguistic, cognitive, social, and digital competencies. Alonso Álvarez (2026) highlights that PBL in English teacher education supports autonomy, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and holistic assessment. A project can generate multiple forms of evidence: planning documents, oral interaction, written products, digital artifacts, presentations, peer evaluation, self-reflection, and final reports. This variety allows teachers to evaluate competencies more comprehensively than through isolated tests.

Task-Based Language Teaching also aligns well with competency-based assessment because tasks produce observable language use. When learners complete a task, teachers can evaluate whether they understood input, negotiated meaning, used vocabulary appropriately, maintained interaction, organized discourse, and achieved a communicative goal. Sani and Emah (2025) report that task-based instructional strategy improved students' speaking performance in fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary. This type of evidence is particularly valuable because it reflects language use in meaningful contexts.

Competency-based assessment requires instruments that make criteria visible. Rubrics are one of the most useful tools for this purpose. A rubric can describe levels of performance in relation to fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, coherence, interaction, organization, task achievement, digital competence, or collaboration. Rubrics help teachers evaluate consistently and help learners understand expectations. They also support formative feedback because the rubric identifies where the learner is and what improvement would look like.

Analytic rubrics are especially useful in TEFL because language performance is multidimensional. A speaking task, for example, may include pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, interaction, and task completion. A writing task may include content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and academic conventions. Holistic rubrics may be useful for quick evaluation, but analytic rubrics provide more detailed feedback. In competency-based assessment, the choice of rubric depends on the purpose of the task, the level of learners, and the type of evidence needed.

Digital assessment tools have expanded the possibilities for competency-based TEFL. Learning management systems, online quizzes, electronic portfolios, collaborative documents, video submissions, audio recordings, peer feedback platforms, and gamified assessment tools allow teachers to collect evidence of learning in varied ways. Zhang and Crawford (2023) found that Quizizz as a gamified formative assessment tool supported motivation, engagement, internalization, and performance in EFL learners. This suggests that digital tools can make assessment more interactive and motivating when they are connected to learning goals.

Online assessment also presents challenges. Ahmad et al. (2023) address online assessment in English for Specific Academic Purposes and identify issues related to infrastructure, assessment literacy, student engagement, academic integrity, and the need for context-specific assessment guidelines. These concerns are relevant to TEFL because digital assessment may fail if students lack access, if teachers lack training, if tasks are poorly designed, or if integrity is not addressed. Competency-based digital assessment therefore requires clear criteria, ethical guidelines, technical support, and meaningful task design.

Academic integrity is a growing concern in technology-supported assessment. With AI tools, online translators, automatic writing assistants, and open-access resources, students

may produce texts or answers without demonstrating their own competence. This does not mean that technology should be banned. It means that assessment must be redesigned. Teachers can use oral defenses, reflective commentaries, process portfolios, drafts, in-class writing, personalized tasks, source analysis, and metacognitive reflections to verify learning. Competency-based assessment focuses on performance and process, making it more difficult to reduce learning to copied products.

Self-regulation is another key dimension of competency-based assessment. Ren et al. (2026) conceptualize formative assessment as a self-regulation engine in blended language learning, showing that continuous feedback, reflective journals, peer interaction, and online-offline mechanisms can strengthen motivation, strategy use, reflection, and sustainable learning. This approach is highly relevant for adult learners because they need to become capable of monitoring their own language development beyond the classroom. Assessment should therefore help learners plan goals, evaluate strategies, interpret feedback, and make adjustments.

Learning logs and reflective journals are practical tools for self-regulation. Students can record what they practiced, what difficulties they experienced, what feedback they received, what strategies they used, and what they plan to improve. These instruments make learning visible and encourage students to connect effort with progress. In TEFL, reflection can be linked to speaking performance, writing revision, vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, digital practice, or project development. The teacher can use these reflections to provide personalized feedback and adjust instruction.

Competency-based assessment also involves evaluating collaboration. In contemporary TEFL, students often work in pairs or groups to complete tasks, projects, presentations, and digital products. Collaboration is not automatically successful. It requires communication, negotiation, responsibility, role distribution, conflict resolution, and shared decision-making. Assessment should therefore include evidence of collaborative competence. Peer evaluation forms, group process reports, contribution logs, and teacher observation can help assess not only the final product, but also the quality of interaction.

Digital competence is another relevant assessment dimension. As the previous section established, English learning in higher education increasingly occurs through digital environments. Students must use platforms, search for information, evaluate sources,

collaborate online, create multimodal products, and use digital tools ethically. Shlenova (2025) connects online courses with language competence, digital literacy, academic integrity, autonomy, and critical thinking. In TEFL assessment, digital competence can be evaluated through online portfolios, multimedia presentations, collaborative documents, QR-based tasks, digital reading annotations, or responsible use of AI-supported tools.

Competency-based assessment should also include receptive skills. Listening and reading are sometimes assessed through multiple-choice items, but these formats only capture limited aspects of comprehension. Teachers can assess receptive competence through summaries, note-taking, oral responses, graphic organizers, reading journals, source evaluations, comprehension discussions, and synthesis tasks. Jiang et al. (2024) provide evidence that mobile learning can support reading and listening proficiency when assessed through standardized measures. This evidence can be complemented in classroom practice by performance-based tasks that show how learners use input to produce meaning.

Vocabulary assessment should move beyond translation or isolated definitions. Learners need to demonstrate that they can understand and use words in context, identify collocations, recognize register, apply terminology, and incorporate vocabulary into oral or written production. Llamuca Auquilla's (2023) work on QR codes and vocabulary acquisition suggests that digital resources can support vocabulary learning through visual and interactive access to online materials. Assessment can include vocabulary notebooks, contextualized quizzes, oral use of target words, writing tasks, semantic maps, and digital glossary projects.

Pronunciation assessment should also reflect contemporary goals. Villablanca Agurto (2023) shows that pronunciation instruction involves beliefs about intelligibility, segmentals, suprasegmentals, models, confidence, and teacher development. Assessment should therefore avoid using native-like pronunciation as the only standard. More appropriate criteria include intelligibility, comprehensibility, word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, intonation, pronunciation of key academic vocabulary, and communicative effectiveness. Learners can submit recorded tasks, compare versions over time, and reflect on their oral progress.

Competency-based assessment must be transparent. Students need to know what is being assessed, why it matters, how it connects to learning outcomes, and how they can improve. Transparency reduces anxiety and supports autonomy. Teachers can share rubrics before tasks, analyze sample performances, conduct rubric-based peer review, and provide exemplars. This helps learners internalize quality standards and understand assessment as part of learning.

The following table presents competency-based assessment strategies for foreign language learning in higher education.

Table 5

Competency-based assessment strategies in efl learning

Competency	Evidence of learning	Assessment strategy	Feedback focus	Possible instrument
Communicative competence	Uses English appropriately in real or simulated tasks	Oral tasks, interviews, role-plays, presentations, academic discussions	Fluency, intelligibility, interaction, clarity, and task achievement	Speaking rubric
Linguistic competence	Uses vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and discourse structures with increasing control	Quizzes, contextualized language tasks, written and oral production	Accuracy, complexity, lexical range, pronunciation, and form-meaning connection	Analytic language rubric
Academic literacy	Reads, writes, interprets, and argues in academic contexts	Summaries, essays, reports, annotated readings, portfolios	Coherence, genre awareness, source use, citation, and argumentation	Writing portfolio
Collaborative competence	Participates responsibly in group tasks and peer learning	PBL, peer assessment, collaborative writing, group presentations	Contribution, negotiation, responsibility, and shared production	Peer assessment form
Digital competence	Uses digital tools ethically and productively for language learning	LMS tasks, QR resources, apps, collaborative documents, multimedia products	Autonomy, digital literacy, academic integrity, and multimodal communication	Digital task checklist
Self-regulation	Plans, monitors, evaluates, and adjusts language learning	Reflective journals, self-assessment, learning logs, goal-setting tasks	Strategy use, progress, motivation, and response to feedback	Reflection guide

Note. The table organizes competency-based assessment in EFL learning by connecting competencies, evidence of learning, assessment strategies, feedback focus, and possible instruments for higher education contexts.

The table emphasizes that assessment must collect diverse evidence. A student's English competence cannot be represented by one score alone. Communicative competence appears in speaking tasks, interaction, and presentations. Linguistic competence appears in controlled and open production. Academic literacy appears in reading and writing tasks. Collaborative competence appears in group processes. Digital competence appears in online work and multimodal production. Self-regulation appears in reflection and response to feedback. This multidimensional view is aligned with the complexity of language learning in higher education.

The table also shows that feedback must be differentiated according to the competency assessed. Feedback on speaking cannot be identical to feedback on academic writing or digital collaboration. Teachers need to identify what kind of improvement is expected in each case. For example, feedback on communicative competence may focus on turn-taking, fluency, and clarity, while feedback on academic literacy may focus on coherence, argumentation, and citation. This specificity increases the usefulness of assessment.

Competency-based assessment also requires institutional coherence. If a program claims to develop communicative, academic, digital, and intercultural competencies, then syllabi, activities, assessment instruments, and graduation profiles must reflect these goals. Otherwise, assessment becomes disconnected from curriculum. This point prepares the transition toward curriculum design in the next chapter, where alignment among outcomes, syllabi, didactic units, assessment, and graduate profiles will become central.

The implementation of competency-based assessment is demanding. It requires time, rubrics, teacher training, digital tools, feedback culture, and institutional support. Teachers may resist it if they perceive it as more work without adequate recognition. Students may resist it if they are accustomed to traditional exams and grades. Institutions may resist it if administrative systems are designed only for numerical scoring. These challenges do not invalidate competency-based assessment; they show that assessment reform must be accompanied by professional development, clear policies, manageable instruments, and shared criteria.

A competency-based approach transforms assessment into a pedagogical process that supports learning, motivation, reflection, and improvement. In TEFL, this transformation is necessary because language competence is demonstrated through use, not only through

knowledge about language. Students need opportunities to perform, receive feedback, revise, collaborate, reflect, and transfer what they learn to academic and professional contexts. Assessment becomes meaningful when it helps learners understand their progress and when it helps teachers make informed instructional decisions.

Foreign language assessment in higher education should therefore operate as a bridge among teaching, learning, curriculum, and professional formation. It should provide evidence of what students can do with English, how they improve, how they use feedback, and how they participate in communicative, academic, collaborative, and digital tasks. This approach strengthens TEFL because it places assessment at the service of learning rather than reducing it to certification.

Critical Discussion

The development of this chapter shows that contemporary TEFL in higher education is shaped by a persistent tension between methodological innovation and classroom reality. The reviewed corpus supports the relevance of communicative approaches, task-based learning, project-based work, cooperative learning, flipped classrooms, gamification, digital platforms, mobile learning, and formative assessment. Yet, the existence of these approaches in academic literature does not guarantee their systematic implementation in classrooms. Lakew, Filatie, and Chanie (2025) report that teachers may fail to employ innovative strategies such as cooperative learning, task-based learning, project-based learning, differentiated learning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and technology integration, even when these strategies are recognized as pedagogically valuable. This gap suggests that TEFL reform depends not only on methodological knowledge, but also on institutional support, teacher preparation, resources, professional motivation, and contextual feasibility.

A second critical issue concerns the relationship between technology and pedagogy. The corpus demonstrates that ICT, online courses, mobile applications, QR codes, collaborative platforms, gamified tools, and artificial intelligence can support English learning by expanding access to resources, increasing exposure to input, promoting interaction, and enabling flexible practice. Poudel (2022) shows that ICT can be useful for accessing materials, preparing lessons, presenting content, and conducting collaborative activities in higher education. However, Hashemi and Kew (2021) identify lack of confidence, lack of

effective training, and lack of time as major barriers to ICT integration. This evidence requires a balanced interpretation: technology can enrich TEFL only when it is pedagogically designed, critically selected, and supported by teacher competence. Without these conditions, digital resources may reproduce traditional instruction, distract learners, or intensify inequalities.

The chapter also reveals that the management of receptive and productive skills requires more than skill-by-skill instruction. Listening, reading, speaking, and writing must be treated as interconnected processes that support academic communication and professional participation. Adult learners need meaningful input, emotional security, strategic guidance, opportunities for interaction, and feedback that helps them improve. Studies on speaking anxiety, pronunciation instruction, mobile learning, and vocabulary acquisition show that skill development is affected by affective, cognitive, technological, and contextual factors (Zulfikar, 2023; Villablanca Agurto, 2023; Jiang et al., 2024; Llamuca Auquilla, 2023). A rigid separation of skills may simplify planning, but it does not reflect how English is used in academic and professional life.

Another relevant tension concerns assessment. Traditional evaluation often emphasizes grades, final tests, and measurable linguistic accuracy, while competency-based assessment requires evidence of performance, process, reflection, collaboration, digital competence, and self-regulation. Muho and Taraj (2022) show that formative assessment practices such as strategic questioning, portfolios, self-assessment, and peer assessment can positively affect motivation for learning English. Ren et al. (2026) also frame formative assessment as a mechanism that supports self-regulated learning through feedback, reflection, and blended learning processes. These contributions challenge assessment cultures that reduce learning to certification. In TEFL, assessment must help students understand how they use English, how they improve, and how they can transfer learning to communicative contexts.

The critical challenge is that competency-based assessment demands time, rubrics, teacher training, institutional coherence, and feedback literacy. Teachers may recognize the value of portfolios, peer assessment, self-assessment, digital projects, and performance tasks, but they also need manageable conditions to implement them. If institutions continue to privilege numerical grading and standardized testing without recognizing formative

processes, teachers may struggle to sustain competency-based assessment. Assessment reform therefore requires curricular, administrative, and professional alignment.

The strongest implication of this chapter is that effective TEFL practice cannot be reduced to methodological novelty. Innovation becomes meaningful only when it is connected to linguistic foundations, adult learning needs, digital competence, formative assessment, and curricular coherence. The English teacher in higher education must act as a designer of learning environments, mediator of communication, evaluator of competencies, curator of digital resources, and reflective professional. This expanded role requires continuous professional development and institutional conditions that support pedagogical transformation.

The discussion also prepares the transition toward curriculum design. Methodologies, skill integration, technology, and assessment cannot remain as individual teacher decisions disconnected from academic planning. They must be articulated in syllabi, learning outcomes, didactic units, graduate profiles, assessment systems, and continuous improvement processes. The next chapter will therefore examine curriculum design as the axis that allows linguistic foundations and TEFL practices to become part of a coherent academic structure.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The development of Chapter II confirms that teaching English as a Foreign Language in higher education requires an integrated pedagogical model in which methodology, skill development, technology, and assessment operate as connected dimensions of teacher practice. TEFL cannot be understood as the application of isolated techniques or as the reproduction of traditional methods centered on grammar explanation, vocabulary memorization, and final testing. The evidence reviewed throughout the chapter shows that English teaching becomes more meaningful when learners are placed at the center of the process, when language is used for communicative and academic purposes, when technologies are pedagogically mediated, and when assessment provides feedback for improvement rather than merely certifying achievement.

One of the most relevant conclusions of this chapter is that contemporary methodological principles must be flexible, contextualized, and reflective. Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, Project-Based Learning, cooperative learning,

differentiated instruction, flipped classrooms, gamification, and active learning offer valuable possibilities for TEFL, but none of them should be applied mechanically. Their effectiveness depends on how teachers adapt them to learners' needs, institutional realities, proficiency levels, available resources, and learning outcomes. The reviewed studies suggest that strategies such as task-based learning and project-based learning can strengthen participation, confidence, speaking performance, critical thinking, and learner autonomy when they are planned around meaningful purposes and clear assessment criteria (Liu, 2024; Alonso Álvarez, 2026; Sani & Emah, 2025).

The chapter also concludes that the management of receptive and productive skills in adult learners must be approached through integration rather than fragmentation. Listening, reading, speaking, and writing are not independent compartments of language instruction; they are interrelated processes that allow learners to access input, construct meaning, interact with others, and produce academic or professional discourse. Adult learners need structured exposure to English, opportunities for repeated practice, emotional safety, vocabulary support, pronunciation guidance, writing feedback, and tasks that connect input with production. Studies on speaking anxiety, pronunciation instruction, mobile learning, and QR-based vocabulary acquisition demonstrate that skill development is shaped by affective, cognitive, technological, and contextual conditions (Zulfikar, 2023; Villablanca Agurto, 2023; Jiang et al., 2024; Llamuca Auquilla, 2023).

Another major conclusion concerns the role of technology in TEFL practice. Digital tools can expand exposure to English, support flexible learning, diversify input, promote collaboration, provide immediate feedback, and strengthen learner autonomy. Online courses, mobile applications, podcasts, QR codes, LMS platforms, collaborative documents, gamified assessment tools, and AI-supported resources can enrich English language teaching when they are connected to pedagogical objectives. Nevertheless, the chapter also establishes that technology does not improve learning by itself. Its impact depends on teacher training, access, infrastructure, digital confidence, task design, feedback, and ethical use. The studies reviewed on ICT integration show both opportunities and barriers, including access to resources, collaborative learning, motivation, lack of confidence, insufficient training, time limitations, and infrastructure problems (Poudel, 2022; Hashemi & Kew, 2021; Fitria, 2023).

Competency-based assessment emerges as a decisive component of contemporary TEFL. The chapter demonstrates that evaluating English learning should involve more than assigning grades or measuring isolated linguistic knowledge. Assessment must provide evidence of communicative competence, linguistic control, academic literacy, collaboration, digital competence, and self-regulation. Formative assessment practices such as strategic questioning, portfolios, self-assessment, peer assessment, reflective journals, rubrics, and digital feedback can motivate learners and guide their improvement. Muho and Taraj (2022) show that formative assessment practices have a positive relationship with motivation in English learning, while Ren et al. (2026) frame formative assessment as a mechanism that strengthens self-regulated learning in blended language environments.

The chapter further concludes that the English teacher in higher education must assume an expanded professional role. The teacher is not only a transmitter of linguistic content, but a designer of learning experiences, mediator of interaction, facilitator of skill integration, curator of digital resources, provider of formative feedback, and evaluator of competencies. This role requires methodological knowledge, linguistic awareness, technological competence, assessment literacy, and reflective practice. Teachers must be able to decide when to use explicit instruction, when to promote communicative practice, when to integrate digital tools, when to provide corrective feedback, and how to align assessment with learning outcomes. This complexity confirms that TEFL is a professional and reflective field, not a set of classroom routines.

A final conclusion is that the strategies and practices analyzed in this chapter must be institutionalized through curriculum design. Methodological innovation, integrated skills instruction, technological resources, and competency-based assessment cannot depend only on individual teacher initiative. They need to be articulated through syllabi, learning outcomes, didactic units, assessment systems, graduate profiles, teacher training, and continuous improvement processes. This creates the necessary transition toward Chapter III, where curriculum design will be examined as the academic axis that organizes, aligns, and sustains English teacher education. From this perspective, the movement from linguistic foundations to TEFL strategies must continue toward curriculum articulation, because effective English teaching requires not only knowing the language and knowing how to teach it, but also knowing how to organize it within coherent academic programs.

CHAPTER III

CURRICULUM

DESIGN AS AN AXIS

OF ACADEMIC

ARTICULATION

CHAPTER III: CURRICULUM DESIGN AS AN AXIS OF ACADEMIC ARTICULATION

I. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum design in English language teacher education constitutes more than an administrative arrangement of courses, contents, credits, and institutional requirements. It is an academic architecture through which linguistic foundations, pedagogical strategies, assessment practices, professional expectations, and graduate profiles are intentionally connected. In this sense, the curriculum operates as an axis of articulation because it transforms educational purposes into organized learning experiences, and it allows English language teaching to move from isolated classroom practices toward a coherent formative project. When curriculum design is weak, English instruction risks becoming fragmented, dependent on individual teacher decisions, and disconnected from the competencies that future graduates are expected to demonstrate. When curriculum design is coherent, the program can align language knowledge, communicative performance, methodological preparation, intercultural competence, digital literacy, employability, and continuous improvement.

The relevance of curriculum design becomes especially significant in higher education, where English is no longer taught only as a linguistic subject, but as a means of academic participation, professional communication, intercultural interaction, and lifelong learning. Contemporary English programs must respond to changing learner profiles, labor market demands, institutional accreditation processes, digital transformation, and the need for inclusive pedagogical models. Aminah, Krisnadhi, and Hidayanto (2025) argue that outcome-based curriculum design in higher education requires alignment among program-level outcomes, course-level learning outcomes, and the broader components of curriculum implementation, since overly general or abstract outcomes make it difficult for instructors to translate institutional intentions into teachable and assessable learning experiences. This perspective is essential for English language education because communicative competence, academic literacy, and professional language use cannot be guaranteed by declarative objectives alone; they require systematic curricular mapping, methodological coherence, and evidence-based assessment.

From this perspective, curriculum design must be understood as a dynamic process that connects macro-curricular decisions with micro-pedagogical action. Macro-curricular planning defines the graduate profile, program learning outcomes, course sequence, curriculum map, and institutional standards. Micro-curricular planning translates those decisions into syllabi, didactic units, classroom tasks, materials, feedback strategies, and assessment instruments. The bridge between both levels is decisive. A well-formulated graduate profile loses academic force if it is not reflected in course learning outcomes, and a well-designed classroom activity loses curricular meaning if it is not connected to broader program competencies. Lesson planning literature emphasizes that every lesson should have a clearly defined learning goal and that planning functions as a guide, resource, and historical document reflecting teaching philosophy, learner characteristics, materials, and goals. Therefore, curriculum design in English language teaching requires continuity from institutional intention to classroom implementation.

The shift toward outcome-based education reinforces this need for alignment. Outcome-Based Education places the student at the center of the learning process and organizes curriculum, teaching, and assessment around observable competencies. In this approach, learning outcomes are not peripheral statements, but structuring principles that guide course development, methodology, assessment, and quality assurance. Asmi, Kamaruddin, Takke, and Hardi (2025) explain that OBE curriculum review requires the alignment of Graduate Learning Outcomes, Course Learning Outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment systems, with attention to stakeholder needs and performance-based assessment. In the context of English language teacher education, this means that the curriculum must specify what graduates should be able to do with English, how they should teach it, how they should assess learning, and how they should adapt instruction to diverse educational contexts.

The curriculum also needs to respond to English for Specific Purposes, employability, and professional relevance. Handayani (2024) emphasizes that ESP courses must be updated according to changes in industry, terminology, communicative requirements, intercultural communication, professional writing, and digital resources. Similarly, Gómez Arandia (2024) shows that general English instruction may be insufficient when students need to read specialized documentation, use technical vocabulary, and communicate in professional environments, which justifies the design of complementary ESP syllabi based

on needs analysis. These contributions are relevant because English curricula in higher education must be flexible enough to integrate general communicative competence with academic English, professional English, disciplinary discourse, and technological mediation.

Curricular coherence also depends on methodological flexibility. English language teaching has moved beyond the search for a single universal method. Post-method pedagogy proposes that teachers should act as reflective practitioners capable of adapting instruction to local contexts, learner needs, institutional realities, and sociopolitical conditions. Rukanuddin and Islam (2025) explain that post-method pedagogy is organized around particularity, practicality, and possibility, emphasizing teacher autonomy, learner-centeredness, and context-sensitive teaching. This view strengthens curriculum design because a curriculum should not impose rigid methodological prescriptions; rather, it should provide a coherent framework that allows teachers to select communicative, task-based, project-based, blended, inclusive, and assessment-oriented strategies according to learning outcomes and learner realities.

The chapter also assumes that curriculum design must be continuously reviewed. A curriculum that is not evaluated becomes static, even when language practices, technologies, student needs, and professional expectations change. Rodríguez-Paz, Zamora-Hernandez, González-Mendivil, and Hernández Carrasco (2025) present a continuous improvement model for accreditation success based on the systematic collection, analysis, and visualization of key performance indicators, allowing institutions to make data-driven decisions and strengthen academic programs. Pham, Nguyen, and Paton (2024) also highlight that academic program review in higher education involves comprehensive processes, support resources, peer evaluation, periodic review cycles, stakeholder participation, and data-driven decision-making. These models are especially useful for English programs because curriculum updating should be supported by evidence from students, teachers, graduates, employers, assessment results, learning analytics, accreditation standards, and institutional priorities.

This chapter develops curriculum design as the academic structure that allows the previous dimensions of the book to become sustainable. Chapter I established the linguistic foundations needed for English teacher education, while Chapter II examined TEFL strategies, skill management, technology integration, and competency-based assessment.

Chapter III now examines how those foundations and practices are organized through curriculum principles, macro- and micro-planning, alignment between learning outcomes and graduate profiles, and continuous improvement models. The central argument is that English teacher education requires a curriculum capable of integrating language, pedagogy, assessment, context, employability, and quality assurance into a coherent system. Curriculum design, therefore, is not a bureaucratic requirement but the formative mechanism through which institutions define, implement, evaluate, and renew the kind of English teacher they intend to prepare.

II. DESARROLLO

Principles of curriculum design applied to english language teaching

Curriculum design applied to English language teaching must be understood as a deliberate process through which educational intentions are transformed into coherent, progressive, assessable, and context-sensitive learning experiences. In higher education, an English curriculum cannot be reduced to a sequence of topics, grammar units, textbook chapters, or isolated communicative activities. It must articulate what learners are expected to achieve, why those achievements are relevant, how learning opportunities will be organized, what evidence will demonstrate progress, and how the curriculum will be reviewed over time. This is especially important in English teacher education because future teachers require not only linguistic competence, but also pedagogical, intercultural, technological, reflective, and assessment-related competencies.

The first principle of curriculum design for English language teaching is relevance. A curriculum becomes relevant when it responds to the academic, professional, social, cultural, and communicative realities of its learners. In contemporary higher education, English is linked to employability, internationalization, academic mobility, digital communication, access to scientific literature, and participation in global professional communities. Therefore, English curriculum design must begin with a careful analysis of learner needs, institutional purposes, professional expectations, and disciplinary contexts. Turgunova (2025) explains that English for Specific Purposes responds to the communicative needs of students in non-linguistic fields such as engineering, information technology, economics, and medicine, where English is required for professional interaction, academic reading, technical documentation, and workplace communication.

This contribution reinforces the idea that English curricula should not be generic when learners require language for specific academic or professional domains.

Relevance also implies moving beyond an abstract view of English proficiency. A student may complete several levels of general English and still struggle to read specialized texts, write professional reports, understand technical vocabulary, or participate in disciplinary communication. Gómez Arandia (2024), in a syllabus design proposal for Software Analysis and Development students, reports that general English instruction focused on basic communication and grammatical structures was insufficient for learners who needed to understand specialized documentation and interact in software development contexts. This evidence supports the need for curricula based on diagnostic analysis and stakeholder consultation. English programs must ask what students actually need English for, what genres they must interpret or produce, what communicative situations they will face, and what linguistic resources are required in their professional fields.

The second principle is coherence. Curriculum coherence refers to the logical relationship among graduate profiles, program learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, contents, methodologies, resources, assessment instruments, and evidence of achievement. A curriculum lacks coherence when outcomes describe communicative competence, but classroom practice remains limited to memorization; when syllabi claim to develop academic writing, but assessment consists only of grammar quizzes; or when graduate profiles mention intercultural communication, but no course provides opportunities for intercultural analysis or interaction. Coherence is therefore not a decorative characteristic of curriculum documentation; it is the condition that allows a program to function as an integrated academic system.

Outcome-Based Education offers an important framework for curriculum coherence. Aminah et al. (2025) emphasize that OBE requires alignment between program learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, and curriculum components, while also warning that outcomes formulated in overly general terms can generate inconsistencies between what programs declare and what teachers can actually teach or assess. In English language teaching, this problem is frequent. Phrases such as “students will communicate effectively in English” or “students will develop communicative competence” may sound appropriate, but they are too broad if they are not translated into observable performances, levels of complexity, contexts of use, assessment criteria, and expected products. Curriculum

design must therefore convert general intentions into precise, teachable, and assessable outcomes.

The third principle is progression. English learning develops over time through gradual expansion of vocabulary, grammar, discourse control, pronunciation, reading strategies, writing complexity, interactional competence, pragmatic awareness, and academic literacy. A curriculum must organize this development sequentially. Progression prevents redundancy, fragmentation, and abrupt transitions between courses. It helps determine which competencies are introduced, reinforced, mastered, and evaluated at each level of the program. In English teacher education, progression should move from foundational linguistic awareness to communicative use, from controlled practice to authentic tasks, from general English to academic and professional English, and from guided teaching practice to reflective pedagogical autonomy.

Curriculum progression also requires attention to learners' diversity. Students do not enter higher education with identical proficiency, learning histories, motivation, or access to resources. Pan (2024) notes that adult English learners present heterogeneous levels of language proficiency, time constraints, psychological barriers, and different professional purposes, which makes standardized instructional models insufficient. This observation is relevant for curriculum design because progression cannot be rigidly linear for all learners. English curricula need diagnostic mechanisms, differentiated support, flexible resources, remedial pathways, and opportunities for extension. A curriculum that assumes all students learn at the same pace risks excluding those who require additional support and underchallenging those who can advance further.

The fourth principle is constructive alignment. Constructive alignment means that learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment tasks must work together. Cheung, Geertshuis, Liu, and Albashiry (2026) show how constructive alignment and backward design can be used to embed employability capabilities into a university course by aligning course learning outcomes with institutional graduate attributes and industry standards, then redesigning assessment and activities to support real-world skills. This principle is directly applicable to English language teaching. If an English program expects graduates to teach, assess, and communicate in English, then courses must provide authentic opportunities to design lessons, analyze language, interact orally, produce academic texts, evaluate learner performance, and reflect on teaching decisions.

Constructive alignment is especially valuable because it prevents assessment from becoming disconnected from learning. When assessment tasks do not match learning outcomes, students may focus on passing tests rather than developing competencies. For example, a curriculum may state that students will be able to conduct academic presentations in English, but if the assessment only evaluates written grammar exercises, the outcome is not being measured. Similarly, a course may claim to develop curriculum design competence, but if students never produce a syllabus, a unit plan, or an assessment rubric, the outcome remains unverified. Curriculum design must ensure that students demonstrate learning through evidence that corresponds to the stated outcomes.

Backward design strengthens constructive alignment by beginning with the expected results. Barón (2023) shows that backward design can connect teaching and learning through the establishment of expected outcomes, contextualized activities, and oral tasks that support speaking accuracy in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, coherence, and fluency. In English curriculum design, backward design requires curriculum developers to ask what graduates should be able to do, what evidence would demonstrate that ability, and what learning experiences would prepare them to produce such evidence. This sequence changes the logic of planning: the curriculum is not built by accumulating content, but by organizing learning around desired competencies.

The fifth principle is contextualization. A curriculum must respond to the sociocultural, linguistic, institutional, and technological context in which it is implemented. Post-method pedagogy contributes significantly to this principle. Rukanuddin and Islam (2025) explain that post-method pedagogy challenges rigid method-based frameworks and proposes a context-sensitive orientation based on particularity, practicality, and possibility, where teachers become reflective practitioners capable of adapting instruction to local realities. In curriculum design, this means that English programs should not impose a single methodological formula for all courses, teachers, and learners. Instead, they should provide a coherent framework that allows adaptation according to learner needs, institutional resources, cultural expectations, and professional purposes.

Contextualization also includes democratic and inclusive curriculum thinking. Nigar, Kostogriz, Mhilli, and Yu (2024) argue for an English as an Additional Language curriculum understood as a democratic and responsive practice that recognizes multilingual backgrounds, intercultural capabilities, lived experiences, and the need to

move beyond monolingual and monocultural norms. This view is highly relevant for English teacher education because future teachers must be prepared to work with diverse learners. Curriculum design should include linguistic diversity, cultural plurality, intercultural communication, identity, equity, and inclusive pedagogy as formative components. English should not be taught as a neutral code detached from learners' realities, but as a social and cultural practice that must be ethically mediated.

The sixth principle is integration. English curriculum design must integrate linguistic, pedagogical, technological, intercultural, and evaluative dimensions. Chapter I demonstrated that English teacher education requires linguistic foundations; Chapter II showed that TEFL practice requires methodology, skill integration, technology, and assessment. The curriculum must now integrate those dimensions into a structured academic pathway. Silva (2025) proposes an integrative TESOL framework that connects curriculum development, pedagogical strategies, classroom discourse, and assessment models, emphasizing that teacher-student interaction, lesson design, formative assessment, and competency-based evaluation influence learner engagement and outcomes. This integrative perspective is useful because English programs cannot treat curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment as separate administrative units.

Integration also refers to the relationship between language learning and employability. English teacher education should prepare graduates not only to know English, but to teach it, design learning experiences, assess competencies, use technologies, interact professionally, and adapt to institutional demands. Cheung et al. (2026) argue that employability is strengthened when course outcomes, graduate attributes, industry standards, assessments, and active learning experiences are aligned through curriculum intervention. In English teacher education, employability may involve classroom communication, lesson planning, curriculum design, digital resource creation, assessment literacy, intercultural mediation, research skills, and reflective professional practice. These competencies must be visible in the curriculum rather than assumed as implicit outcomes.

The seventh principle is flexibility. English curricula must be sufficiently stable to provide coherence, but sufficiently flexible to respond to changing needs. English language teaching is affected by technological innovation, artificial intelligence, digital literacy, internationalization, language policy, new professional demands, and changing learner expectations. Yuniarti (2025) identifies a persistent gap between expected curriculum

goals and actual classroom practices, especially when innovative methods such as Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, blended learning, flipped classrooms, and digital tools are recommended but limited by resources, teacher readiness, and curricular rigidity. This evidence shows that flexibility is not an optional feature; it is necessary for curriculum relevance and implementation.

Flexibility should not be confused with lack of structure. A flexible curriculum still maintains clear outcomes, progression, assessment criteria, and quality standards. What changes is the way learning experiences are adapted. For instance, an English curriculum may require all students to develop academic presentation competence, but teachers may use debates, video presentations, podcasts, simulations, or research exposés depending on context. A curriculum may require writing competence, but courses may develop it through essays, reports, lesson plans, reflective journals, digital portfolios, or professional documentation. Flexibility allows different routes toward shared outcomes.

The eighth principle is evaluability. A curriculum must be designed in such a way that its effects can be observed, documented, analyzed, and improved. Learning outcomes, assessment tasks, rubrics, portfolios, performance evidence, student feedback, graduate data, employer input, and analytics are necessary to determine whether the curriculum is achieving its purposes. Hernández-Campos, Hilliger, and García-Peñalvo (2026) explain that curriculum analytics can support the direct assessment of learning outcomes associated with 21st-century competencies and generate actionable insights for continuous improvement in higher education. This contribution is important because curriculum design should not end with implementation. It must include mechanisms for collecting evidence and using it to improve the program.

Evaluability is particularly important in competency-based English teacher education. Competencies such as communicative competence, academic literacy, pedagogical design, assessment literacy, intercultural competence, and digital competence cannot be evaluated only through isolated examinations. They require authentic evidence: oral presentations, written products, teaching simulations, lesson plans, curriculum maps, portfolios, peer feedback, classroom observation, and reflective analysis. A curriculum that values competencies must build assessment systems capable of showing how those competencies develop over time.

The ninth principle is sustainability. Curriculum design should not depend exclusively on individual teachers' initiative. If a program relies only on the creativity or commitment of certain teachers, coherence may disappear when staff change. Sustainable curriculum design requires shared documentation, common criteria, institutional support, teacher development, periodic review, and collaborative decision-making. Basavaraj (2020) argues that institutional data can support curriculum enhancement by identifying how curriculum structures, prerequisites, post-requisites, student mobility, and time to graduation influence student success, leading to data-driven curriculum refinement. This insight can be transferred to English programs, where curriculum sustainability requires evidence about student progression, course sequencing, achievement gaps, and the impact of curricular decisions.

Sustainability also depends on teacher participation. Curriculum design is often weakened when teachers are treated only as implementers of externally produced documents. Post-method and reflective pedagogy argue that teachers should be recognized as professionals capable of interpreting context and generating pedagogical knowledge. Al-Seghayer (2025) presents an evolving language teaching philosophy based on supportive environments, methodological flexibility, classroom ecosystems, intrinsic motivation, communicative competence, purposeful technology integration, responsive assessment, and intercultural competence. These principles can inform curriculum design because they show that teachers require frameworks that enable reflection and adaptation, not only compliance.

The tenth principle is continuity between curriculum and lesson planning. A curriculum becomes real in the lesson, but the lesson should not be isolated from the curriculum. Isomiddinova (2022) explains that lesson planning includes macro- and micro-planning: at the macro level, the lesson reflects teaching philosophy, methodology, syllabus, texts, and materials; at the micro level, it organizes objectives, skills, activities, resources, timing, and links with previous and future lessons. This distinction is central for English curriculum design because the syllabus and the lesson plan must be connected. A syllabus defines the route; the lesson plan activates it in practice.

Continuity also requires didactic units. A didactic unit is the intermediate space between the syllabus and the daily lesson. It organizes outcomes, contents, resources, tasks, skills, assessment, and feedback over a defined learning sequence. Cardona Rojas and Castro

Arévalo (2024), in a study on scaffolding strategies for English writing skills, used a didactic sequence, diagnostic test, field diaries, final test, and analysis grid to document how instructional intervention supported writing development. Although the study focuses on a specific learner, its curricular implication is broader: teaching interventions become stronger when they are planned as structured units with diagnosis, support, evidence, and evaluation.

Curriculum design applied to English language teaching must also include assessment as a curricular principle, not only as a course component. Lujan Marcos, Luna Mantari, and Ungaro Chilon (2020) found a relationship between curricular planning and academic performance in students of an English language center, using dimensions such as methodology, curricular programming, learning sessions, and evaluation. Their study reinforces the idea that planning affects learning outcomes. If methodology, sessions, and evaluation are poorly articulated, academic performance can suffer. If they are coherently planned, they can support meaningful learning.

English curriculum design therefore requires a systemic view. The curriculum must be relevant to learner and professional needs, coherent in its internal structure, progressive in competency development, aligned in outcomes and assessment, contextualized in local realities, integrated across linguistic and pedagogical dimensions, flexible in implementation, evaluable through evidence, sustainable through institutional support, and continuous from macro-planning to classroom practice. These principles form the academic foundation for designing English programs that prepare future teachers not only to use English, but to teach, assess, adapt, and improve English learning in diverse contexts.

Table 6

Principles of curriculum design applied to english language teaching

Principle	Curricular meaning	Application to English language teaching
Relevance	Connection with academic, social, professional, and learner needs	English for academic, professional, intercultural, digital, and specific-purpose communication
Coherence	Logical relationship among outcomes, contents, methods, resources, and assessment	Consistency among graduate profile, syllabus, didactic units, tasks, and evaluation criteria
Progression	Sequential and cumulative development of competencies	Movement from basic language use to academic, professional, pedagogical, and reflective performance

Constructive alignment	Correspondence among learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment evidence	Course outcomes, TEFL strategies, rubrics, portfolios, oral tasks, written products, and teaching simulations
Contextualization	Adaptation to institutional, cultural, linguistic, and learner realities	ESP, EAP, post-method pedagogy, multilingual awareness, and inclusive English teaching
Integration	Articulation of linguistic, pedagogical, technological, intercultural, and evaluative dimensions	Connection between applied linguistics, TEFL methodology, assessment literacy, digital tools, and curriculum planning
Flexibility	Capacity to adapt while maintaining shared outcomes and quality standards	Differentiated tasks, blended learning, digital resources, project-based work, and varied evidence of learning
Evaluability	Possibility of documenting, analyzing, and improving learning outcomes	Curriculum mapping, rubrics, learning analytics, stakeholder feedback, and continuous program review
Sustainability	Institutional capacity to maintain, document, review, and improve curriculum quality	Collaborative planning, teacher development, shared criteria, data-informed decisions, and accreditation evidence
Continuity	Connection between macro-curricular design and classroom practice	Graduate profile, curriculum map, syllabus, didactic unit, lesson plan, activity, and assessment

Note. The table synthesizes curriculum design principles and their application to English language teaching in higher education, emphasizing the relationship between institutional planning, pedagogical implementation, assessment evidence, and continuous improvement.

The table organizes the principles that should guide English curriculum design as an academic system. Its purpose is not to present isolated categories, but to show how each principle contributes to curricular coherence. Relevance ensures that English responds to real needs. Coherence connects the parts of the curriculum. Progression organizes development over time. Constructive alignment makes learning outcomes teachable and assessable. Contextualization prevents the curriculum from becoming disconnected from learners' realities. Integration connects language, pedagogy, technology, and assessment. Flexibility allows adaptation. Evaluability generates evidence. Sustainability protects the curriculum from fragmentation. Continuity ensures that institutional intentions become classroom practices.

These principles establish the foundation for the next level of analysis: macro- and micro-planning. Once the curriculum has defined its guiding principles, it must organize them into concrete planning structures. Graduate profiles, program outcomes, curriculum maps, syllabi, didactic units, lessons, resources, tasks, rubrics, and improvement mechanisms must operate as connected elements. The strength of an English curriculum

is therefore measured not only by the quality of its conceptual foundations, but by its capacity to translate those foundations into teachable, assessable, and improvable learning experiences.

Macro- and micro-planning: from syllabus to didactic unit

Macro- and micro-planning constitute the operational structure through which curriculum design becomes visible in English language teaching. A curriculum may contain solid principles, coherent graduate profiles, and well-formulated learning outcomes, but these elements only acquire pedagogical value when they are translated into syllabi, didactic units, lesson plans, learning activities, resources, assessment instruments, and feedback processes. In higher education, this relationship is especially important because English programs are expected to prepare students for academic, professional, intercultural, digital, and pedagogical performance. Therefore, planning must connect institutional goals with classroom practice in a way that is both systematic and flexible.

Macro-planning refers to the broad academic decisions that organize the direction of a program. It includes the graduate profile, institutional mission, program learning outcomes, curriculum map, course sequence, credit distribution, competency framework, methodological orientation, assessment policy, and quality assurance mechanisms. In English language teacher education, macro-planning defines what type of graduate the program intends to form: a professional with linguistic competence, pedagogical knowledge, intercultural sensitivity, digital competence, curriculum design capacity, assessment literacy, and reflective practice. These elements cannot be left to improvisation because they establish the formative identity of the program.

Micro-planning refers to the concrete organization of teaching and learning experiences. It includes the syllabus, didactic units, session plans, learning activities, classroom resources, interaction patterns, formative assessment tasks, rubrics, feedback strategies, and evidence of student performance. Micro-planning is where the curriculum becomes teachable. A course outcome related to academic writing, for example, must be transformed into reading tasks, writing models, drafting processes, feedback moments, revision activities, and assessment criteria. A program outcome related to communicative competence must become oral interaction tasks, pronunciation practice, listening input,

discourse strategies, presentations, and rubrics. In this sense, micro-planning is not a minor administrative procedure; it is the space where curriculum design becomes learning experience.

The relationship between macro- and micro-planning must be understood as reciprocal. Macro-planning gives direction to micro-planning, but micro-planning provides evidence about whether the macro-curricular design is viable, relevant, and effective. If teachers cannot translate a program outcome into course activities or assessment tasks, the outcome may be too abstract. If students consistently fail to demonstrate a competency, the curriculum sequence may require adjustment. If a syllabus repeats content already covered in previous courses, the curriculum map may reveal redundancy. If students complete a course without producing evidence aligned with the graduate profile, curriculum coherence is weakened. Therefore, planning must be designed as a continuous movement between institutional intention and classroom evidence.

Outcome-Based Education strengthens this connection because it requires every level of the curriculum to be aligned with observable learning. Aminah et al. (2025) emphasize that OBE requires consistency between program learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, and curriculum components, while also noting that overly general outcomes can create implementation problems for instructors. This argument has direct implications for English curriculum design. A graduate profile may state that students will become competent English teachers, but this statement must be unpacked into outcomes such as designing lesson plans, teaching integrated skills, assessing language performance, using digital resources, explaining linguistic structures, and adapting instruction to diverse learners. These outcomes must then appear in syllabi, units, activities, and assessment evidence.

Asmi et al. (2025) also provide a useful basis for understanding macro-planning through OBE curriculum review. Their work explains that curriculum revision involves mapping Graduate Learning Outcomes, Course Learning Outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment systems in response to stakeholder needs and performance-based evidence. This perspective is relevant because English programs cannot be planned only from internal academic preferences. They must consider students, graduates, employers, professional standards, accreditation criteria, teachers, and social demands. Macro-

planning should therefore be informed by needs analysis, curriculum mapping, stakeholder consultation, and evidence of learning.

The syllabus occupies an intermediate position between macro- and micro-planning. It is more specific than the curriculum map, but broader than a lesson plan. It communicates the purpose of the course, learning outcomes, contents, methodology, resources, assessment system, schedule, policies, and expected student responsibilities. In English language teaching, the syllabus should not be treated as a static list of topics. It should function as an academic contract, a learning guide, a map of competencies, and a communication device between teacher, students, program, and institution. Bouhlassa (2020), in the analysis of project-based learning and the Algerian English syllabus, identifies the syllabus as a contract, a communicative device, a plan, and a cognitive map. This conceptualization helps understand why the syllabus is central in curriculum articulation.

A syllabus designed for English teacher education should include more than course content. It should clarify how the course contributes to the graduate profile, which competencies it develops, how students will demonstrate learning, what types of tasks they will complete, how feedback will be provided, and how assessment criteria relate to expected outcomes. For example, a course on English phonology should not merely list topics such as vowels, consonants, stress, rhythm, and intonation. It should specify what future teachers will be able to analyze, explain, teach, and assess regarding pronunciation and oral intelligibility. A course on TEFL methodology should not only describe approaches such as CLT, TBLT, and PBL. It should require students to design tasks, conduct microteaching, adapt materials, and reflect on learner needs.

The syllabus is also a space for contextualization. Gómez Arandia (2024) demonstrates this point through a proposal for a complementary ESP syllabus for Software Analysis and Development students, where the need for technical reading comprehension, specialized vocabulary, and professional documentation emerged from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and field observations. This study is useful because it shows that syllabus design must respond to specific communicative demands. In English teacher education, a similar process should identify what future English teachers need to know and do: manage classrooms, design didactic units, explain language, assess learning, use technologies, support diverse learners, and participate in curriculum improvement.

ESP-oriented syllabus design reinforces the importance of needs analysis. In general English courses, planning often begins with textbook units or grammatical sequences. In ESP and professional English courses, planning begins with the communicative situations, genres, vocabulary, skills, and tasks learners need in their field. Handayani (2024) argues that ESP curriculum revision should respond to employability, professional communication, interviews, business writing, digital resources, and project-based learning. This perspective can enrich English teacher education because teacher preparation also has specific professional language demands. Future teachers need English for classroom instruction, academic reading, lesson planning, feedback, research, institutional communication, and professional development.

The didactic unit represents the next level of curricular translation. While the syllabus organizes the course, the didactic unit organizes a coherent sequence of learning around specific outcomes. A didactic unit may last one week, two weeks, a module, or a thematic block, depending on the course design. Its purpose is to connect outcomes, content, input, practice, production, assessment, and reflection. In English language teaching, didactic units are especially useful because language learning requires sequencing. Learners need exposure, modeling, guided practice, communicative use, feedback, revision, and transfer. A unit must therefore organize learning as a process rather than as a single class event.

A didactic unit in English teacher education might focus on designing communicative speaking tasks. Its outcomes could include analyzing task components, selecting appropriate input, designing interaction patterns, preparing assessment criteria, and conducting microteaching. Its activities could include reading about TBLT, analyzing sample tasks, adapting textbook activities, designing a speaking task, peer-reviewing task instructions, performing microteaching, and reflecting on feedback. Its assessment evidence could include a task design template, a microteaching performance, a peer feedback form, and a reflective report. This structure shows how a didactic unit mediates between syllabus outcomes and classroom activity.

Cardona Rojas and Castro Arévalo (2024) provide a useful example of didactic unit planning in English learning. Their study on scaffolding strategies for English writing skills used a diagnostic test, didactic sequence, descriptive field diaries, final test, and analysis grid to document the development of writing skills through visual and verbal demonstrations. Although the research focuses on a third-grade learner, its planning logic

is transferable to higher education: diagnosis identifies needs, the unit provides structured support, evidence is collected during implementation, and final performance is compared with initial performance. In English teacher education, this model can guide the design of units that include diagnosis, scaffolding, performance, and evaluation.

Scaffolding is central to micro-planning because it helps learners move from current ability to more complex performance. A didactic unit should not assume that students can immediately demonstrate the target competency. It must provide supports such as models, examples, guiding questions, graphic organizers, collaborative work, feedback, staged tasks, and revision opportunities. In writing instruction, scaffolding may involve analyzing model texts, generating vocabulary, planning paragraphs, drafting, peer reviewing, and revising. In speaking instruction, it may involve pronunciation modeling, discourse markers, rehearsal, role-play, recording, and feedback. In curriculum design courses, scaffolding may involve analyzing a syllabus, mapping outcomes, drafting units, designing rubrics, and receiving peer critique.

Lesson planning is the most immediate level of micro-planning. It organizes what happens in a specific class session. Isomiddinova (2022) describes the lesson plan as a guide, resource, record, road map, blueprint, or game plan that helps teachers define goals, sequence activities, manage time, select materials, connect previous and future lessons, and prepare for assessment. This view is especially important for novice English teachers, who need structured planning to manage objectives, activities, interaction, timing, and evaluation. A lesson plan should not be rigid, but it should provide direction.

A lesson plan should include a clear learning objective, evidence of learning, materials, stages, procedures, timing, interaction patterns, language focus, assessment strategy, and reflection. For example, in an English methodology course, a lesson objective might be: “Students will design a task-based speaking activity aligned with a course learning outcome and an assessment rubric.” The evidence could be a completed task design template. The stages could include activation of prior knowledge, analysis of a model, guided design, peer review, revision, and exit reflection. The assessment strategy could be a checklist aligned with task components. This type of planning connects lesson design with syllabus outcomes and graduate competencies.

The quality of lesson planning also affects student performance. Lujan Marcos, Luna Mantari, and Ungaro Chilon (2020) found a relationship between curricular planning and academic performance in an English language center, analyzing dimensions such as methodology, curricular programming, learning sessions, and evaluation. Their findings support the idea that planning is not merely bureaucratic documentation. When methodology, sessions, and evaluation are coherent, they contribute to meaningful learning. When they are weakly connected, student performance may be affected.

Macro- and micro-planning also require alignment with methodological flexibility. Post-method pedagogy helps curriculum designers avoid the error of prescribing one method as universally valid. Rukanuddin and Islam (2025) describe post-method pedagogy as an alternative to rigid method-based instruction, emphasizing teacher autonomy, learner-centeredness, contextual adaptability, and reflective practice. In planning terms, this means that the syllabus should not force all teachers to use the same technique, but it should establish the outcomes and principles that guide pedagogical decisions. Teachers can then select communicative, task-based, project-based, inductive, blended, or scaffolded strategies depending on the objective.

This distinction is important because planning should provide structure without suppressing professional judgment. If a syllabus is too vague, teachers may improvise without coherence. If it is too rigid, teachers may be unable to respond to learner needs. A balanced syllabus specifies outcomes, contents, assessment evidence, and methodological principles, while allowing teachers to adapt tasks, resources, and interaction according to context. Al-Seghayer (2025) argues that effective language teaching requires supportive environments, methodological flexibility, classroom ecosystems, intrinsic motivation, communicative competence, purposeful technology integration, responsive assessment, and intercultural competence. These principles can guide planning without reducing teacher agency.

Project-Based Learning provides a strong example of how macro- and micro-planning interact. At the macro level, PBL may be included in the syllabus as a methodology aligned with competencies such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and professional performance. At the micro level, PBL requires careful sequencing of tasks, roles, timelines, resources, feedback, and assessment. Bouhlassa (2020) shows that PBL can enhance learners' knowledge, skills, motivation, commitment, and authentic language

use, but also identifies implementation challenges related to teacher preparation, resources, learner motivation, and curriculum conditions. Planning must therefore anticipate both pedagogical potential and implementation barriers.

The same principle applies to Task-Based Instruction. Badr (2022) found that TBI had a positive impact on students' speaking performance in several measures, including fluency, lexical sophistication, lexical diversity, and syntactic complexity, while teachers expressed both recognition of its value and concerns about implementation challenges. This finding is relevant for curriculum planning because methodologies do not become effective simply because they are mentioned in a syllabus. They require time, training, materials, classroom management, assessment criteria, and institutional support. Planning must make these conditions visible.

Macro-planning should also define the place of assessment. Assessment cannot be added at the end of a course as an afterthought. It must be designed from the beginning as part of backward planning. If the expected outcome is oral communicative competence, assessment must include oral performance. If the expected outcome is lesson planning, assessment must include a lesson plan. If the expected outcome is curriculum design, assessment must include a curriculum product. If the expected outcome is reflective practice, assessment must include reflection. Cheung et al. (2026) demonstrate the value of backward design by aligning course learning outcomes with graduate attributes and industry standards, then redesigning assessment and learning activities to promote employability capabilities. This model is directly applicable to English teacher education.

Assessment planning should include formative and summative evidence. Formative assessment supports learning during the process through feedback, drafts, peer review, self-assessment, and revision. Summative assessment certifies achievement at key points. In English curriculum design, both are necessary. A didactic unit on academic writing may include formative feedback on outlines and drafts, while the final product may be a revised essay. A unit on teaching pronunciation may include practice, peer feedback, microteaching, and a final teaching demonstration. A course on curriculum design may include progressive products such as needs analysis, outcome formulation, syllabus design, unit planning, and rubric construction.

Macro- and micro-planning must also incorporate digital resources. Technology should be planned according to outcomes, not added as decoration. If the objective is collaborative writing, Google Docs or similar tools can support co-authoring and feedback. If the objective is listening comprehension, podcasts or videos can provide input. If the objective is vocabulary learning, digital glossaries or QR codes may support access. If the objective is portfolio assessment, an LMS or digital portfolio can collect evidence. Technology integration must therefore be linked to learning tasks and assessment evidence, not merely to institutional modernization.

Curriculum planning also requires attention to inclusivity. Nigar et al. (2024) propose a curriculum understood as democratic practice, shaped by teachers' lived experiences, multilingual realities, intercultural capabilities, and ethical engagement with learner diversity. In English teacher education, this means that planning should consider linguistic diversity, learner identity, cultural background, accessibility, and differentiated support. A syllabus should not assume a single ideal learner. A didactic unit should provide multiple routes for participation. A lesson plan should include strategies for students who need support and those who need extension.

Inclusive planning is also relevant for gifted learners and learners with specific needs. Di Pierro (2022) argues that language teaching for gifted learners requires differentiated and supportive teaching strategies that stimulate talent, creativity, autonomy, and linguistic capability while preventing boredom, disengagement, or underachievement. Although this research focuses on giftedness, its implication for curriculum design is broader: English programs should prepare teachers to design differentiated tasks and personalized learning supports. Future teachers need to know how to adapt units, materials, and assessment for diverse learners.

Micro-planning should also integrate reflective practice. Every lesson and unit should generate information for improvement. Teachers can reflect on whether outcomes were achieved, which activities worked, which students struggled, what evidence was collected, what feedback was useful, and what changes are needed. Reflection connects micro-planning with continuous improvement. A lesson plan should therefore include space for post-lesson notes, student responses, assessment results, and future adjustments. In teacher education, students should also learn to reflect on their own planning decisions.

The following table synthesizes the relationship among macro-curricular, meso-curricular, micro-curricular, and improvement levels in English curriculum design.

Table 7

Macro and micro-planning in english curriculum design

Planning level	Main components	Guiding question	TEFL application
Macro-curricular level	Institutional mission, graduate profile, program learning outcomes, curriculum map, course sequence, quality standards	What type of English-competent graduate does the program seek to form?	Academic, professional, intercultural, digital, pedagogical, and reflective English competencies
Meso-curricular level	Course objectives, syllabus, course learning outcomes, contents, methodology, assessment system	How does each English course contribute to the program outcomes and graduate profile?	English for general, academic, pedagogical, and specific purposes through coherent course design
Micro-curricular level	Didactic units, lesson plans, tasks, resources, interaction, scaffolding, rubrics, feedback	What learning experiences will help students demonstrate the expected outcome?	TBLT, PBL, integrated skills, communicative activities, writing processes, microteaching, and formative assessment
Improvement level	Evidence of learning, teacher reflection, student feedback, stakeholder input, curriculum review, learning analytics	How will the curriculum be adjusted based on implementation evidence?	Syllabus revision, task improvement, assessment redesign, resource updating, and curriculum mapping

Note. The table presents curriculum planning as a connected system that links institutional purposes, course design, didactic implementation, and evidence-based improvement in English language teaching.

The table shows that planning operates across interdependent levels. Macro-planning defines the destination of the program. Meso-planning organizes the contribution of each course. Micro-planning creates the learning experiences through which students develop and demonstrate competencies. The improvement level uses evidence to adjust the curriculum. These levels should not function separately. A strong English curriculum allows a graduate profile statement to be traced through a program outcome, a course outcome, a syllabus component, a didactic unit, a lesson activity, an assessment instrument, and an improvement decision.

This traceability is the key to academic articulation. If a program claims that graduates will be able to design English lessons, the curriculum should show where that ability is introduced, practiced, assessed, and improved. If a program claims that graduates will be able to use English for academic communication, the curriculum should show which courses develop reading, writing, speaking, listening, discourse, and assessment evidence.

If a program claims that graduates will teach inclusively, the curriculum should show where diversity, differentiation, scaffolding, and reflective practice are taught and assessed.

Macro- and micro-planning therefore transform curriculum design into a living academic process. The syllabus, didactic unit, and lesson plan are not isolated documents; they are instruments of curricular coherence. They allow teachers to convert institutional intentions into learning experiences and allow programs to collect evidence about student development. In English language teacher education, this process is decisive because the quality of future teachers depends on the coherence between what the curriculum promises, what the courses teach, what the students practice, and what the assessment verifies.

Alignment between learning outcomes and graduate profiles

Alignment between learning outcomes and graduate profiles is one of the central conditions for curriculum quality in English language teacher education. A graduate profile expresses the professional, academic, linguistic, pedagogical, intercultural, technological, and ethical attributes that a program expects its students to demonstrate at the end of their formation. Learning outcomes translate that profile into observable achievements distributed across courses, units, activities, and assessment tasks. When the relationship between both elements is weak, the curriculum becomes declarative: it states what graduates should become, but it does not provide a reliable path for developing and verifying those competencies. When alignment is strong, the curriculum becomes a coherent system in which every course contributes intentionally to the formation of the expected graduate.

The graduate profile should not be understood as a ceremonial institutional statement. In English language teacher education, it defines the kind of professional that the program intends to prepare. Such a graduate should be able to use English with linguistic accuracy and communicative effectiveness, interpret language as a cultural and social practice, design pedagogical strategies for diverse learners, plan lessons and didactic units, assess language competencies, integrate technologies critically, participate in curriculum improvement, and act reflectively in educational contexts. These attributes require curricular organization. They cannot emerge only through isolated courses or personal

teacher effort. They must be intentionally mapped, taught, practiced, assessed, and reviewed.

Outcome-Based Education provides a strong framework for this relationship because it places learning outcomes at the center of curriculum design. Aminah et al. (2025) emphasize that OBE requires a structured correspondence among program outcomes, course outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment components. Their analysis also identifies a common difficulty: when outcomes are written in broad or abstract language, instructors may struggle to translate them into concrete teaching practices and assessment evidence. This problem is especially relevant in English programs, where expressions such as “communicative competence,” “academic literacy,” or “intercultural awareness” may be conceptually valid but operationally weak if they are not defined through performance indicators, expected products, and criteria.

The first step in alignment is therefore the formulation of a clear graduate profile. This profile should identify what graduates will be able to do in professional and academic contexts. In the case of English teacher education, a profile may include dimensions such as linguistic competence, pedagogical competence, curriculum design competence, assessment literacy, digital competence, intercultural competence, research competence, and reflective professional identity. Each dimension must then be translated into program learning outcomes. For instance, if the graduate profile states that graduates will be able to design English learning experiences, the corresponding program outcome should specify that students will design syllabi, didactic units, lesson plans, tasks, materials, and assessment instruments aligned with learner needs and curricular goals.

The second step is mapping program learning outcomes into course learning outcomes. A program outcome should not belong to a single course unless it is highly specialized. Most competencies develop progressively across the curriculum. For example, assessment literacy may be introduced in a methodology course, practiced in a didactics course, applied in teaching practicum, and evaluated in an integrative capstone project. Academic writing may begin with paragraph construction, continue with essay writing, advance toward research-based writing, and culminate in a thesis or academic article. Curriculum mapping allows the program to identify where each outcome is introduced, reinforced, mastered, and assessed.

Asmi et al. (2025) provide a useful reference for this process because their work on OBE curriculum review connects graduate learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, stakeholder needs, curriculum mapping, teaching methods, and assessment systems. Their contribution shows that alignment is not achieved by writing outcomes in separate documents. It requires a systematic review of the relationship among institutional expectations, program structure, course contributions, teaching strategies, and assessment evidence. In English teacher education, this implies asking whether each course contributes visibly to the graduate profile and whether the sequence of courses supports progressive development.

The third step is aligning course learning outcomes with teaching and learning activities. A course learning outcome must indicate what students are expected to demonstrate, and the activities must prepare them for that demonstration. If an outcome states that students will “design task-based English learning activities,” the course must include analysis of task-based learning, examination of task components, guided design, peer review, classroom simulation, and revision. If an outcome states that students will “evaluate oral English performance,” the course must include rubrics, samples of oral production, criteria for fluency and intelligibility, calibration exercises, and feedback practice. Without this connection, outcomes become statements rather than learning pathways.

The fourth step is aligning learning outcomes with assessment evidence. Assessment is where the curriculum verifies whether students have achieved the expected competencies. Cheung et al. (2026) show that constructive alignment and backward design can connect course learning outcomes with graduate attributes and professional standards, then redesign assessment and activities to support employability-related performance. This contribution is especially valuable for English teacher education because many graduate profile attributes are professional in nature. Future English teachers should not only know about teaching; they should demonstrate that they can plan, teach, assess, adapt, and reflect.

Backward design strengthens alignment because it begins with the end in mind. The curriculum designer first identifies the expected graduate performance, then determines the evidence that would demonstrate such performance, and then designs the learning experiences that will prepare students to produce that evidence. Barón (2023) applies this logic to English learning by showing how backward design can connect expected

outcomes with contextualized activities and oral performance development. In curriculum design for English teacher education, backward design prevents courses from being organized only around content coverage. It forces the program to ask what students must be able to do with that content.

Alignment also requires attention to employability and professional relevance. A graduate profile in English language teacher education should not be disconnected from the realities of schools, universities, language centers, digital platforms, bilingual education, curriculum development, and educational innovation. Cheung et al. (2026) argue that employability skills are strengthened when they are embedded in disciplinary curricula through constructive alignment among learning outcomes, activities, assessment tasks, institutional graduate attributes, and industry standards. In English teacher education, employability can be embedded through teaching simulations, lesson planning, curriculum projects, practicum experiences, digital material design, oral presentations, academic writing, classroom research, and reflective portfolios.

This professional dimension is also visible in English for Specific Purposes. Gómez Arandia (2024) shows that a curriculum designed for Software Analysis and Development students required a shift from general English toward specialized reading comprehension, technical vocabulary, and professional documentation based on the needs of students, graduates, technical instructors, and industry partners. Although this case focuses on ADSO students, its curricular lesson is broader: alignment must respond to real communicative demands. In English teacher education, the curriculum should similarly identify the communicative, pedagogical, and professional situations graduates will face.

Stakeholder participation strengthens alignment because it prevents the graduate profile from being defined only from an internal academic perspective. Students, teachers, graduates, employers, practicum supervisors, curriculum experts, accreditation agencies, and educational institutions can provide information about the competencies graduates actually need. Handayani (2024) emphasizes that ESP curriculum development should consider employability, interviews, professional communication, business writing, digital resources, and project-based learning. In English teacher education, stakeholder input may reveal the need to strengthen classroom English, assessment design, inclusive pedagogy, educational technology, academic writing, or curriculum planning.

Alignment must also consider inclusivity and democratic curriculum principles. Nigar et al. (2024) argue that English curriculum should be responsive to multilingual realities, teacher lived experiences, intercultural capabilities, and democratic participation, rather than being dominated by monolingual and monocultural norms. This perspective implies that graduate profiles should not form teachers who merely reproduce standardized language models without critical awareness. Future English teachers should be able to recognize linguistic diversity, support multilingual learners, mediate intercultural communication, and adapt curriculum to diverse classroom realities.

This inclusive orientation must be reflected in outcomes and assessment. If a graduate profile states that future teachers will promote inclusive English learning, the curriculum should include outcomes related to differentiation, scaffolding, culturally responsive pedagogy, inclusive assessment, and adaptation for learner diversity. Di Pierro (2022) shows that gifted learners require differentiated and supportive teaching strategies that stimulate creativity, autonomy, and linguistic capabilities while preventing boredom and disengagement. Cardona Rojas and Castro Arévalo (2024) also demonstrate how scaffolding strategies can support English writing development through a structured didactic unit, diagnostic evidence, modeling, field diaries, and final assessment. These studies reinforce the need to align graduate profiles with inclusive instructional design.

Another important alignment issue concerns methodological philosophy. A graduate profile may require future teachers to be flexible, reflective, and capable of adapting instruction to context. This expectation should be supported by courses that develop post-method awareness, reflective practice, classroom inquiry, and contextual analysis. Rukanuddin and Islam (2025) explain that post-method pedagogy emphasizes particularity, practicality, and possibility, allowing teachers to move beyond prescriptive methods and develop context-sensitive practices. Al-Seghayer (2025) similarly proposes an evolving language teaching philosophy based on supportive environments, methodological flexibility, classroom ecosystems, intrinsic motivation, communicative competence, purposeful technology integration, responsive assessment, and intercultural competence. These ideas should not remain only theoretical; they should be translated into curriculum outcomes and assessed through reflective teaching products.

For example, a course outcome could state that students will justify methodological decisions according to learner needs, institutional context, and learning outcomes. The

corresponding learning activities could include case analysis, lesson adaptation, microteaching, peer observation, and reflective writing. The assessment evidence could be a teaching rationale or reflective portfolio. This design would align the graduate profile attribute of reflective teacher identity with concrete course performance.

Alignment is also necessary between learning outcomes and language proficiency development. English teacher education programs sometimes assume that students will naturally improve their English proficiency while taking content courses. This assumption is risky. Linguistic development should be intentionally mapped across the curriculum. Courses should specify how they contribute to oral fluency, pronunciation, grammar awareness, academic reading, writing, classroom discourse, and professional communication. Silva (2025) argues that TESOL curriculum development must integrate pedagogical strategies, classroom discourse, and assessment frameworks, with attention to scaffolding, corrective feedback, teacher-student interaction, and competency-based approaches. This integration supports the idea that language proficiency and pedagogical competence should develop together.

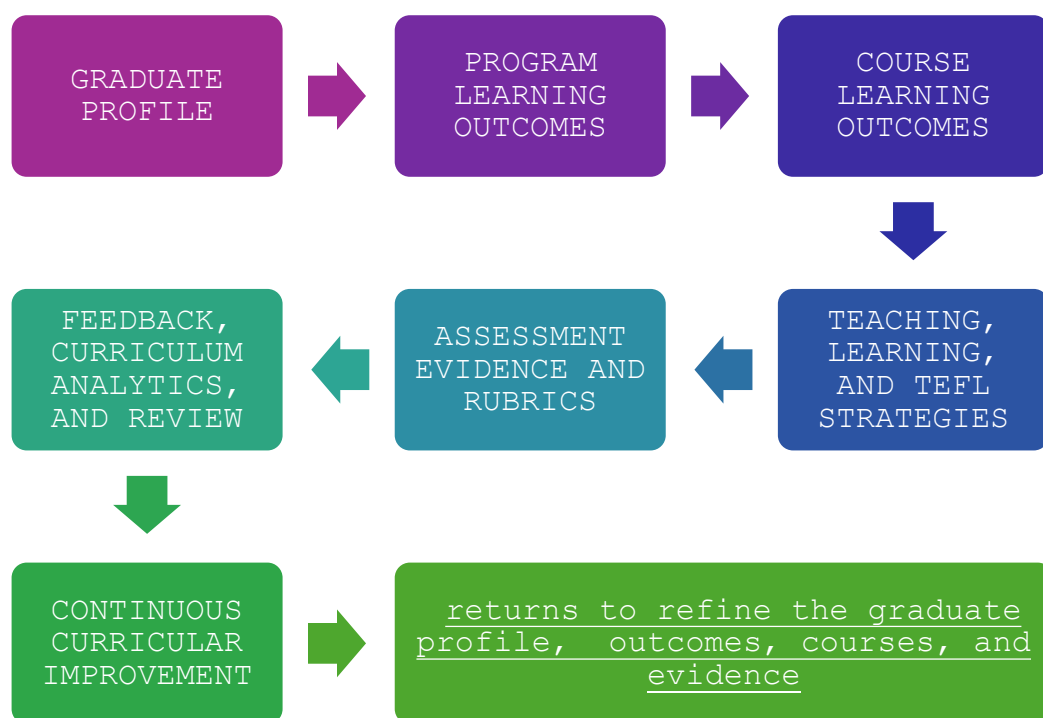
Assessment rubrics are essential tools for alignment because they translate outcomes into criteria. A rubric clarifies what counts as evidence of achievement and what levels of performance are expected. For an oral teaching simulation, criteria may include clarity of instructions, classroom English, pronunciation, interaction management, scaffolding, feedback, and alignment with the lesson objective. For a syllabus design project, criteria may include needs analysis, outcome formulation, content sequence, methodology, assessment system, coherence, and feasibility. Rubrics make the relationship between outcomes and performance visible to students and teachers.

Curriculum analytics can strengthen alignment by providing evidence about outcome achievement. Hernández-Campos et al. (2026) explain that curriculum analytics can support direct assessment of learning outcomes and competencies, especially when programs need robust metrics and actionable insights for improvement. In English teacher education, analytics may include rubric scores, course completion data, portfolio evidence, practicum evaluations, language proficiency results, student feedback, and graduate performance. These data can help programs identify whether outcomes are being achieved, where students struggle, and which parts of the curriculum require adjustment.

Institutional data can also reveal structural barriers to alignment. Basavaraj (2020) demonstrates that curriculum structure, prerequisites, course sequencing, and program-specific requirements can affect student mobility, credit accumulation, and time to graduation, and proposes Adaptive Curriculum Refinement as a data-driven approach for curriculum improvement. In English programs, similar analysis may identify overloaded semesters, weak sequencing, repeated content, insufficient practice before practicum, or missing links between language development and methodology courses. Alignment is therefore not only conceptual; it is also structural.

Figure 3

Curricular alignment model for english teacher education



Note. The figure represents curricular alignment as a sequential and recursive process in which the graduate profile guides program learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, TEFL strategies, assessment evidence, feedback mechanisms, curriculum analytics, and continuous curricular improvement.

The figure shows that alignment is not a one-way administrative sequence. It is recursive because evidence from implementation should return to refine the graduate profile, outcomes, courses, teaching strategies, and assessment systems. A graduate profile may need revision when professional demands change. Program outcomes may need

clarification when teachers cannot translate them into activities. Course outcomes may need adjustment when assessment evidence shows weak progression. Teaching strategies may need redesign when students do not achieve the expected performance. Assessment instruments may need refinement when they do not capture the intended competency.

Learning outcomes should also be aligned with curriculum innovation. Yuniarti (2025) identifies a gap between expected English curriculum goals and actual classroom practices, especially when innovative approaches such as CLT, TBLT, blended learning, flipped classrooms, and digital tools are promoted but limited by resource constraints, teacher readiness, and curricular rigidity. This finding indicates that graduate profiles should not simply declare innovation as an aspiration. Programs must create courses, tasks, resources, and assessment systems that actually develop teachers' capacity to implement innovation.

A well-aligned English teacher education curriculum should therefore include a visible chain of correspondence. The graduate profile defines the professional identity. Program learning outcomes define broad competencies. Course learning outcomes specify the contribution of each course. Didactic units organize learning sequences. Teaching strategies provide practice opportunities. Assessment tasks collect evidence. Rubrics interpret performance. Feedback supports improvement. Curriculum review uses evidence to adjust the program. This chain should be traceable.

This recursive logic is essential in English teacher education because the field changes constantly. New technologies, AI-supported tools, multilingual classrooms, inclusive education policies, internationalization, online learning, and professional demands require curricula to evolve. A program that remains aligned only on paper will gradually lose relevance. A program that uses evidence to review and update alignment can remain academically coherent and professionally responsive.

Alignment also helps prevent curricular overload. English teacher education programs often attempt to include many important areas: linguistics, literature, methodology, curriculum, assessment, research, practicum, technology, inclusion, interculturality, and language proficiency. Without alignment, the program may become crowded with disconnected content. With alignment, each course has a defined contribution to the

graduate profile. Redundancies can be reduced, gaps can be detected, and learning sequences can be strengthened.

A further benefit of alignment is transparency for students. When students understand how each course contributes to their professional formation, they are more likely to perceive learning as meaningful. Cheung et al. (2026) found that aligned curriculum redesign increased student motivation, perceived relevance, engagement, and satisfaction. In English teacher education, students should be able to see how phonology supports pronunciation teaching, how pragmatics supports classroom communication, how TEFL methodology supports lesson design, how assessment supports feedback, and how curriculum design supports academic program coherence.

Alignment also supports teacher collaboration. If each teacher designs a course independently, the program may become fragmented. Curriculum mapping creates a shared language among faculty members. Teachers can identify where competencies begin, where they are reinforced, and where they are assessed. They can coordinate assignments, avoid unnecessary repetition, design integrative projects, and share evidence. This collaborative dimension is necessary because no single course can form the complete graduate profile.

The alignment between learning outcomes and graduate profiles is therefore the structural heart of curriculum design. It converts institutional aspirations into teachable and assessable pathways. It protects curriculum coherence, supports professional relevance, guides assessment, enables data-informed improvement, and strengthens student understanding of their formation. In English teacher education, alignment ensures that linguistic knowledge, TEFL strategies, technological competence, intercultural awareness, assessment literacy, and curriculum design are not isolated components, but integrated dimensions of the same professional project.

Continuous improvement models and curriculum updating

Continuous improvement and curriculum updating are essential conditions for maintaining the academic relevance, quality, and sustainability of English language programs in higher education. A curriculum cannot be understood as a fixed structure that remains valid once it has been approved by an institution. It must be considered a dynamic system that requires periodic review, evidence-based decision-making, stakeholder

participation, and adaptation to changes in language education, professional demands, digital technologies, student profiles, accreditation standards, and social expectations. In English language teacher education, this need becomes even more significant because the curriculum is responsible for preparing professionals who will later design, implement, assess, and improve English learning experiences in diverse educational contexts.

Curriculum updating begins with the recognition that educational needs change. English language teaching is affected by internationalization, employability, migration, multilingual classrooms, artificial intelligence, digital learning environments, English as a lingua franca, inclusive education, and competency-based frameworks. A curriculum designed without mechanisms for renewal can rapidly become disconnected from contemporary realities. Yuniarti (2025) identifies a persistent gap between expected curriculum goals and actual classroom practices in English education, especially when innovative approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, blended learning, flipped classrooms, and digital tools are promoted in theory but limited in practice by teacher readiness, resource constraints, and curricular rigidity. This finding shows that curriculum updating must address not only content, but also implementation conditions.

The first model that supports curriculum improvement is academic program review. Program review is a systematic process through which institutions evaluate the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and quality of an academic program. It usually involves self-study reports, external review, stakeholder feedback, performance indicators, curriculum mapping, assessment results, and improvement plans. Pham, Nguyen, and Paton (2024) describe academic program review as a comprehensive higher education process that includes periodic review cycles, support resources, peer evaluation, data-driven decision-making, and stakeholder participation. In English teacher education, this model can be used to determine whether the program continues to respond to professional expectations, language proficiency demands, teaching standards, and graduate employability.

Academic program review is valuable because it moves curriculum evaluation beyond individual impressions. Instead of asking only whether teachers believe a course is useful, the program review process collects multiple forms of evidence. These may include student achievement data, course completion rates, rubric results, practicum evaluations, graduate surveys, employer feedback, faculty reflections, accreditation reports, syllabus analysis,

and curriculum maps. This evidence allows the institution to identify gaps, redundancies, outdated contents, weak progression, misalignment between outcomes and assessment, or insufficient attention to emerging competencies such as digital pedagogy and inclusive teaching.

The second model is continuous improvement for accreditation and quality assurance. Rodríguez-Paz et al. (2025) propose a continuous improvement model oriented toward accreditation success, based on the systematic collection, analysis, and visualization of key performance indicators through tools such as Excel and Power BI. This model is useful because it connects curriculum quality with evidence management. In English language programs, accreditation processes often require documentation of learning outcomes, teaching strategies, assessment instruments, student achievement, faculty qualifications, stakeholder input, and improvement actions. A program that collects and uses evidence regularly is better prepared for accreditation because quality assurance becomes part of its academic culture rather than an occasional administrative exercise.

Quality assurance should not be reduced to compliance. When accreditation becomes only a documentation requirement, institutions may produce reports without transforming learning. A meaningful continuous improvement model uses accreditation standards as opportunities to strengthen curriculum coherence, assessment validity, teacher collaboration, student support, and graduate outcomes. In English teacher education, this means using accreditation evidence to improve syllabi, revise course sequences, update methodologies, redesign assessment tasks, strengthen practicum experiences, and integrate emerging areas such as AI literacy, intercultural communication, and competency-based assessment.

The third model is curriculum mapping. Curriculum mapping allows programs to visualize how learning outcomes, competencies, contents, courses, activities, assessments, and evidence are distributed across the curriculum. It helps identify whether each graduate profile attribute is introduced, reinforced, mastered, and assessed. In English teacher education, curriculum mapping can show where students develop linguistic foundations, where they practice TEFL methodologies, where they design lesson plans, where they assess language learning, where they use technologies, where they experience practicum, and where they demonstrate integrative professional competence. Aminah et al. (2025) emphasize that OBE requires alignment between program outcomes, course outcomes, and

curriculum components, and that vague outcomes can make implementation difficult. Curriculum mapping responds to this challenge by making alignment visible.

Curriculum mapping also helps prevent fragmentation. A program may include many important courses, but if their relationship is not mapped, competencies may be repeated unnecessarily or omitted entirely. For example, several courses may require oral presentations without progressively developing speaking competence, while no course may explicitly teach rubric design. A curriculum map can reveal these problems. It can also help faculty coordinate assignments, distribute workload, define prerequisite knowledge, and ensure that assessment evidence corresponds to learning outcomes. In English teacher education, mapping is especially important because the program integrates language proficiency, linguistic theory, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, inclusion, technology, and practicum.

The fourth model is stakeholder-based needs analysis. Curriculum updating must be informed by the voices of those who experience or depend on the program: students, teachers, graduates, employers, practicum institutions, academic coordinators, curriculum experts, and professional bodies. Gómez Arandia (2024) demonstrates the importance of stakeholder needs analysis in ESP syllabus design by using surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and field observations to identify the need for technical reading comprehension, specialized vocabulary, and professional documentation among Software Analysis and Development students. In English teacher education, a similar process can identify whether graduates need stronger classroom English, assessment literacy, inclusive pedagogy, digital resource design, academic writing, research skills, or curriculum planning.

Stakeholder input also helps connect curriculum with employability. Cheung et al. (2026) show that constructive alignment can be used to embed employability capabilities into university courses by aligning course learning outcomes with institutional graduate attributes and industry standards, then redesigning assessments and learning activities around authentic, real-world performance. English teacher education programs can use this logic to update curricula according to the demands of schools, universities, bilingual programs, language centers, online education platforms, and curriculum development offices. The goal is not to subordinate education to the labor market, but to ensure that graduates are academically prepared and professionally capable.

The fifth model is data-driven curriculum refinement. Basavaraj (2020) proposes Adaptive Curriculum Refinement as a data-informed approach for curriculum improvement, showing that program curriculum structures, prerequisites, post-requisites, course sequencing, student mobility, and time to graduation can influence student success. This contribution is especially relevant for higher education because curriculum problems are not always visible through syllabus review alone. A program may appear coherent on paper, but institutional data may reveal that students struggle in certain course sequences, take longer to graduate, accumulate credits inefficiently, or face bottlenecks created by prerequisite structures.

English teacher education can benefit from data-driven refinement by examining student progression across language levels, success rates in methodology courses, performance in practicum, results of language proficiency assessments, retention rates, completion of capstone projects, and patterns of course repetition. Such data can reveal whether students enter practicum with sufficient language and pedagogical preparation, whether curriculum sequencing supports gradual development, whether assessment expectations are consistent, and whether some courses function as barriers without providing adequate support. Data do not replace academic judgment, but they provide evidence for decisions that would otherwise depend only on perception.

The sixth model is curriculum analytics. Hernández-Campos et al. (2026) argue that curriculum analytics can support direct assessment of learning outcomes and competencies, especially when higher education programs need robust metrics and actionable insights for continuous improvement. In English language programs, curriculum analytics may include rubric-based performance data, LMS participation, assessment results, portfolio evidence, course-level outcome achievement, student feedback, and program-level dashboards. These tools can help identify whether students are meeting expected competencies and where additional support is needed.

Curriculum analytics must be interpreted carefully. Numbers alone do not explain learning. A low score in academic writing may reflect weak instruction, insufficient scaffolding, unclear criteria, limited language proficiency, lack of feedback, or misalignment between task and outcome. Therefore, analytics should be combined with qualitative evidence such as teacher reflections, student interviews, portfolio analysis, classroom observation, and external review. In English teacher education, mixed evidence

is essential because competencies such as reflective teaching, intercultural awareness, and classroom interaction cannot be fully understood through numerical indicators alone.

The seventh model is curriculum evaluation through established evaluative frameworks. Afriadi and Fitri (2025) discuss curriculum evaluation models such as CIPP, Stake's Responsive Model, formative and summative evaluation, and Tyler's Goal-Oriented Model, emphasizing that no single model fits all educational contexts and that evaluation must correspond to institutional objectives and curricular philosophy. This view is useful because English programs may require different evaluation models depending on purpose. If the goal is to determine whether outcomes were achieved, a goal-oriented model may be useful. If the goal is to understand implementation conditions, CIPP may be more appropriate. If the goal is to respond to stakeholder concerns, a responsive model may be more suitable.

The CIPP model-context, input, process, and product-is particularly useful for English curriculum updating. Context evaluation examines needs, problems, and institutional demands. Input evaluation analyzes resources, faculty, materials, technology, and strategies. Process evaluation monitors implementation, classroom practices, assessment procedures, and student participation. Product evaluation examines outcomes, graduate competencies, performance evidence, and stakeholder satisfaction. In English teacher education, this model allows curriculum evaluation to consider both results and the conditions that produce them. A program may fail to achieve certain outcomes not because the outcomes are inappropriate, but because the input or process dimensions are weak.

Natsheh (2025) contributes to this discussion by presenting program review through the CIPP model with participation from students, faculty, graduates, employers, and external reviewers, as well as benchmarking with national and international standards. This approach is especially relevant for English programs because curriculum quality should be evaluated from multiple perspectives. Students can report learning experiences; faculty can identify implementation challenges; graduates can explain how well the program prepared them; employers can describe professional expectations; external reviewers can compare the program with standards; and benchmark analysis can reveal areas for improvement.

The eighth model is reflective curriculum renewal based on teacher agency. Curriculum improvement should not exclude teachers. Teachers are the professionals who implement the curriculum, observe learner responses, identify difficulties, adapt resources, evaluate performance, and experience institutional constraints. Post-method pedagogy reinforces the value of teacher autonomy and reflection. Rukanuddin and Islam (2025) argue that post-method pedagogy promotes particularity, practicality, and possibility, empowering teachers as reflective practitioners and encouraging context-sensitive strategies. Curriculum updating should therefore include teachers' reflective reports, collaborative meetings, lesson study, teaching portfolios, and professional learning communities.

Teacher participation in curriculum renewal also supports realistic implementation. A curriculum designed without teacher input may include attractive innovations that are difficult to execute due to time, resources, class size, proficiency levels, or assessment policies. Yuniarti (2025) identifies teacher readiness and resource limitations as barriers to implementing innovative English curriculum pathways. This means that curriculum updating should not only add new methodologies; it should also provide professional development, materials, time, technological support, and assessment guidance.

The ninth model is inclusive and democratic curriculum renewal. Curriculum updating should consider linguistic diversity, interculturality, equity, and learner identity. Nigar et al. (2024) propose an English curriculum understood as democratic practice, informed by teachers' lived experiences and responsive to multilingual and multicultural learners. This perspective is important because curriculum improvement should not focus only on efficiency or measurable outcomes. It must also ask whether the curriculum includes diverse learners, recognizes multilingual repertoires, avoids monocultural assumptions, and prepares teachers for ethically responsive practice.

Inclusive renewal also requires attention to differentiated learning. Di Pierro (2022) emphasizes that gifted learners may require supportive and differentiated language teaching strategies to develop creativity, autonomy, motivation, and linguistic capability. Cardona Rojas and Castro Arévalo (2024) show how scaffolding strategies supported English writing development through a didactic sequence and diagnostic-final assessment comparison. These studies indicate that curriculum updating should include differentiated instruction, scaffolding, diagnostic assessment, and flexible evidence of learning.

The tenth model is updating through pedagogical innovation. English curricula must be reviewed according to the methodologies that best support current learning needs. Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, Project-Based Learning, blended learning, flipped classrooms, scaffolding, formative assessment, digital tools, and AI-supported resources should be considered not as fashionable additions, but as possible responses to identified needs. Badr (2022) found that task-based instruction positively affected several measures of speaking performance, including fluency, lexical sophistication, lexical diversity, and syntactic complexity, although teachers also reported implementation challenges. This type of evidence helps curriculum designers decide how and where task-based instruction can be integrated.

Project-Based Learning also provides a useful model for curriculum updating. Bouhlassa (2020) reports that PBL can have positive effects on EFL learners' achievement, motivation, commitment, authentic language use, and skill development, while also requiring teacher knowledge, learner motivation, resources, and institutional support. This means that curriculum updating should not merely state that PBL will be used. It must specify where projects appear in the curriculum, which outcomes they support, how they are assessed, what resources are needed, and how students are prepared to work collaboratively.

Lesson planning research also contributes to improvement. Isomiddinova (2022) argues that lesson planning functions as a guide, resource, record, and reflection of teaching philosophy, student population, materials, and learning goals. This idea has curricular implications because continuous improvement must reach the level of lesson design. A program may revise outcomes and syllabi, but if lessons remain disconnected from those changes, curriculum renewal will not affect learning. Updating should therefore include lesson plan templates, unit design guidelines, assessment rubrics, and reflective teaching procedures.

Curriculum updating also requires a clear process. Programs can begin by collecting evidence, analyzing gaps, consulting stakeholders, revising outcomes, mapping courses, redesigning syllabi, updating units, training teachers, implementing changes, evaluating results, and documenting improvement. This process should be cyclical. Curriculum renewal should not occur only when accreditation is approaching or when external pressure appears. It should be part of normal academic governance.

The following table presents mechanisms that can support continuous improvement and curriculum updating in English language programs.

Table 8

Continuous improvement mechanisms for english curriculum updating

Mechanism	Purpose	Evidence collected	Use in English curriculum
Academic program review	Evaluate relevance, quality, coherence, and effectiveness	Self-study reports, indicators, peer review, stakeholder feedback	Adjust English courses, outcomes, syllabi, assessment systems, and practicum experiences
Curriculum mapping	Verify alignment across program components	Graduate profile, PLOs, CLOs, contents, methodologies, assessment evidence	Detect gaps, redundancies, weak progression, and missing competencies
Stakeholder needs analysis	Identify academic, professional, social, and institutional demands	Students, graduates, employers, faculty, practicum supervisors, external experts	Update ESP, EAP, classroom English, digital pedagogy, assessment literacy, and professional communication
Curriculum analytics	Monitor outcome attainment and progression	LMS data, rubric scores, portfolios, course completion, achievement indicators	Support data-informed decisions, targeted interventions, and evidence-based improvement
Accreditation review	Ensure compliance with external and internal quality standards	KPIs, self-evaluation reports, evaluator feedback, benchmarking evidence	Strengthen quality assurance, documentation, comparability, and program accountability
Formative curriculum evaluation	Improve curriculum during implementation	Teacher reflection, student feedback, classroom evidence, formative assessment data	Adjust units, resources, tasks, feedback strategies, and assessment instruments
Inclusive curriculum review	Ensure responsiveness to learner diversity	Accessibility data, learner profiles, differentiated task evidence, intercultural feedback	Strengthen multilingual awareness, scaffolding, differentiated instruction, and equitable participation
Innovation review	Evaluate the integration of new methodologies and technologies	Pilot results, teacher reports, student engagement, digital evidence, performance tasks	Incorporate TBLT, PBL, blended learning, AI literacy, digital tools, and interactive resources

Note. *The table summarizes mechanisms that support continuous improvement and curriculum updating in English language programs in higher education, emphasizing evidence collection, stakeholder participation, quality assurance, innovation, and inclusive responsiveness.*

The table shows that continuous improvement cannot depend on a single mechanism. Academic program review provides a broad evaluation of quality. Curriculum mapping verifies alignment. Stakeholder needs analysis identifies relevance. Curriculum analytics provides measurable evidence. Accreditation review strengthens accountability. Formative evaluation improves implementation. Inclusive review ensures equity. Innovation review helps the curriculum respond to new pedagogical and technological realities. Together, these mechanisms create a culture of evidence-based renewal.

A curriculum that incorporates continuous improvement becomes capable of learning from its own implementation. If students struggle with academic writing, the program can review writing outcomes, syllabi, assignments, feedback, and progression. If graduates report weak classroom management in English, the program can strengthen microteaching and practicum preparation. If employers demand digital teaching competence, the program can update technology-related outcomes and assessment tasks. If assessment evidence shows weak oral fluency, the program can revise speaking progression across courses. Curriculum updating becomes meaningful when it produces decisions that affect learning experiences.

Continuous improvement also requires documentation. Programs should record what evidence was collected, what findings emerged, what decisions were made, what changes were implemented, and what results followed. This documentation supports institutional memory. Without it, programs may repeat the same problems or depend on individual recollection. Documentation also supports accreditation, faculty collaboration, and transparency for students and stakeholders.

English curriculum updating should be understood as a professional and ethical responsibility. Since language education influences access to academic, professional, intercultural, and social opportunities, programs must ensure that their curricula remain relevant, inclusive, and effective. A stagnant curriculum may reproduce outdated methodologies, ignore learner diversity, underprepare graduates, and weaken institutional quality. An evidence-based curriculum, by contrast, can respond to change while maintaining academic coherence.

The models examined in this section show that curriculum improvement is not an isolated stage after implementation. It is part of curriculum design itself. A curriculum should be designed with the expectation that it will be reviewed, revised, and strengthened. In English teacher education, this means that graduate profiles, learning outcomes, syllabi, didactic units, assessment systems, technologies, and practicum experiences should remain open to evidence-based refinement. Continuous improvement transforms the curriculum into a living academic system capable of sustaining the integration among linguistic foundations, TEFL practices, and institutional quality.

Critical Discussion

The curriculum design perspective developed in this chapter reveals that English language teacher education cannot be sustained by isolated courses, fragmented methodological decisions, or administrative documents that are disconnected from classroom practice. A curriculum becomes academically meaningful when graduate profiles, program learning outcomes, course outcomes, syllabi, didactic units, teaching strategies, assessment evidence, and improvement mechanisms operate as an articulated system. The main critical concern is that many programs declare ambitious competencies but do not always provide the curricular conditions needed for students to develop and demonstrate them. This generates a gap between the intended curriculum, the implemented curriculum, and the learned curriculum.

One of the most relevant tensions concerns the difference between curriculum as document and curriculum as practice. Institutions often produce graduate profiles, syllabi, curriculum maps, and assessment policies; however, the existence of these documents does not guarantee coherent implementation. Aminah et al. (2025) warn that outcome-based curricula may become inconsistent when program outcomes and course outcomes are formulated too generally or when instructors cannot translate them into concrete teaching activities and assessment evidence. This problem is especially visible in English language education because terms such as communicative competence, academic literacy, intercultural competence, and professional performance are frequently used in curricular documents without sufficient operationalization. If these outcomes are not linked to observable tasks, rubrics, feedback processes, and performance evidence, they remain aspirational rather than curricular.

A second tension concerns alignment. Outcome-Based Education and constructive alignment provide powerful tools for organizing curriculum around learning evidence, but they can also be reduced to technical mapping if they are not accompanied by pedagogical reflection. Cheung et al. (2026) show that constructive alignment can strengthen employability when learning outcomes, graduate attributes, industry standards, assessment tasks, and learning activities are coherently redesigned. Yet, alignment should not be interpreted only as the matching of boxes in a matrix. It must generate real learning experiences where students practice, receive feedback, revise, and demonstrate competencies. In English teacher education, alignment becomes meaningful when future

teachers design lessons, conduct microteaching, assess language performance, adapt materials, use English professionally, and reflect on their decisions.

A third critical issue is the relationship between curricular flexibility and institutional coherence. English language teaching requires adaptation to local contexts, learner needs, professional demands, multilingual classrooms, and technological change. Post-method pedagogy supports this flexibility by emphasizing particularity, practicality, and possibility, as well as teacher autonomy and context-sensitive practice (Rukanuddin & Islam, 2025). However, excessive flexibility without curricular structure may produce fragmentation. Each teacher may interpret the program differently, assessment may vary without common criteria, and students may experience uneven progression. The challenge is to design a curriculum that is coherent enough to sustain shared outcomes, but flexible enough to allow contextualized teaching. A strong English curriculum should define what students must achieve while allowing teachers to determine the most appropriate routes for helping learners reach those outcomes.

A fourth tension involves professional relevance. English curricula in higher education must respond to academic formation, but they must also prepare graduates for real professional contexts. ESP research shows that general English instruction may be insufficient when learners need specialized vocabulary, technical reading, professional documentation, and workplace communication. Gómez Arandia (2024) illustrates this need in the design of a complementary ESP syllabus for Software Analysis and Development students based on stakeholder needs and technical reading demands. In English teacher education, professional relevance means preparing graduates not only to know English, but to teach it, plan it, assess it, adapt it, and improve it. Programs that do not include professional tasks such as syllabus design, unit planning, rubric creation, classroom discourse practice, technology-mediated instruction, and curriculum review may form students with theoretical knowledge but insufficient professional readiness.

A fifth critical concern is curriculum updating. Curriculum improvement should not occur only when accreditation processes require evidence. Rodríguez-Paz et al. (2025) demonstrate that continuous improvement can be strengthened through systematic collection, analysis, and visualization of indicators that support data-informed academic decisions. Basavaraj (2020) similarly shows that institutional data can reveal how curriculum structures, prerequisites, and sequencing affect student success, making data-

driven curriculum refinement possible. These contributions challenge English programs to move beyond intuitive curriculum revision. Decisions about course sequencing, learning outcomes, assessment systems, practicum preparation, and language proficiency development should be supported by evidence from students, teachers, graduates, employers, rubrics, portfolios, and institutional data.

A sixth tension concerns inclusion and democratic curriculum. Nigar et al. (2024) argue that English curriculum should be understood as a responsive and democratic practice that recognizes multilingual backgrounds, intercultural capabilities, and learners' lived experiences. This perspective challenges curriculum models that privilege monolingual, monocultural, or standardized assumptions. English teacher education must prepare future teachers to work with diverse learners, including students with different linguistic repertoires, cultural identities, proficiency levels, learning needs, and abilities. Inclusive curriculum design requires differentiated tasks, scaffolding, diagnostic assessment, flexible evidence of learning, and intercultural reflection. Without this dimension, curriculum alignment may become efficient but not equitable.

The critical reading of the chapter therefore suggests that curriculum design must be treated as an ethical, pedagogical, and institutional responsibility. It is ethical because it defines access to learning opportunities and professional formation. It is pedagogical because it shapes how students experience English learning and teacher preparation. It is institutional because it requires coordination, documentation, quality assurance, and continuous improvement. The curriculum is not merely the place where courses are listed; it is the structure through which an institution decides what kind of English teacher it intends to form, how that formation will occur, what evidence will verify it, and how the program will renew itself in response to changing realities.

III. CONCLUSIONES

The development of Chapter III establishes curriculum design as the academic mechanism that gives coherence, direction, and sustainability to English language teacher education. While linguistic foundations provide the conceptual understanding of how English works, and TEFL strategies provide the methodological basis for teaching it, curriculum design organizes both dimensions into a structured formative pathway. A program that prepares English teachers cannot depend only on isolated courses, individual teacher decisions, or

general institutional statements. It requires a curriculum capable of articulating graduate profiles, learning outcomes, syllabi, didactic units, teaching strategies, assessment evidence, and continuous improvement mechanisms into a coherent academic system.

A central contribution of this chapter is the recognition that curriculum design applied to English language teaching must be guided by principles such as relevance, coherence, progression, constructive alignment, contextualization, integration, flexibility, evaluability, sustainability, and continuity. These principles allow English programs to move beyond fragmented planning and toward a model in which every curricular component has a clear purpose. Relevance ensures that English responds to academic, professional, intercultural, and digital needs. Coherence connects outcomes, contents, methodologies, resources, and assessment. Progression organizes competency development over time. Constructive alignment links learning outcomes with teaching activities and assessment evidence. Contextualization adapts the curriculum to local realities and learner diversity. Integration connects linguistic, pedagogical, technological, intercultural, and evaluative dimensions. Evaluability and sustainability ensure that the curriculum can be documented, reviewed, improved, and maintained institutionally.

The chapter also demonstrates that macro- and micro-planning are inseparable. Macro-planning defines the broad academic architecture of the program: graduate profile, program learning outcomes, curriculum map, course sequence, institutional standards, and quality assurance mechanisms. Micro-planning translates those decisions into syllabi, didactic units, lesson plans, tasks, resources, rubrics, feedback strategies, and classroom practices. This relationship is essential because a graduate profile only becomes meaningful when it can be traced into specific learning experiences.

The alignment between learning outcomes and graduate profiles emerged as the structural heart of curriculum design. A graduate profile expresses the professional identity that the program seeks to form, while learning outcomes define the observable achievements through which that identity is developed and verified. Outcome-Based Education strengthens this relationship by demanding explicit correspondence among program outcomes, course outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessment tasks. Aminah et al. (2025) warn that overly general outcomes can create inconsistencies because teachers may struggle to translate abstract institutional intentions into concrete teaching and assessment practices. Therefore, English teacher education programs must formulate

outcomes that are observable, assessable, progressive, and connected to real professional performance.

Constructive alignment and backward design offer practical routes for achieving this coherence. Cheung et al. (2026) show that aligning course learning outcomes with graduate attributes and professional standards, and then redesigning assessment and learning activities accordingly, can enhance student performance, engagement, satisfaction, and professional relevance. Applied to English teacher education, this means that future teachers should not only study theories of language and pedagogy; they should demonstrate competencies through lesson plans, didactic units, teaching simulations, curriculum maps, rubrics, portfolios, oral presentations, academic writing, digital materials, and reflective products. Assessment must verify what the graduate profile declares.

The chapter further concludes that English curriculum design must remain responsive to context and professional needs. ESP research confirms that general English instruction may be insufficient when learners require language for specific academic or workplace purposes. Gómez Arandia (2024) shows that students in software development needed a complementary ESP syllabus focused on technical vocabulary and reading comprehension because general English courses did not fully respond to professional documentation and industry communication demands. For English teacher education, this implies that the curriculum must identify the real communicative, pedagogical, digital, and institutional situations graduates will face. Future teachers need English not only to communicate, but also to teach, explain, assess, design, research, and participate professionally.

Another major conclusion is that curriculum design must be flexible without becoming incoherent. Post-method pedagogy contributes to this balance by rejecting rigid universal methods and emphasizing particularity, practicality, possibility, teacher autonomy, learner-centeredness, and contextual adaptability (Rukanuddin & Islam, 2025). A strong curriculum should not prescribe every technique, but it should define outcomes, criteria, progression, and evidence. Teachers need space to adapt methodologies to learner needs and local realities, but they also need shared curricular references that prevent fragmentation.

Continuous improvement completes the curricular cycle. A curriculum must be designed, implemented, evaluated, and renewed. Program review, curriculum mapping, stakeholder needs analysis, curriculum analytics, accreditation review, formative curriculum evaluation, inclusive review, and innovation review provide mechanisms for evidence-based updating. Rodríguez-Paz et al. (2025) demonstrate the value of systematic collection, analysis, and visualization of indicators for accreditation and continuous improvement, while Basavaraj (2020) shows that institutional data can support curriculum refinement by revealing how curriculum structures affect student success. These contributions reinforce the idea that English programs should not revise curricula only by intuition or external pressure; they should use evidence from students, teachers, graduates, employers, assessment results, portfolios, practicum performance, and institutional data.

The chapter also affirms that curriculum design has an ethical and inclusive dimension. English teacher education should not reproduce monolingual, monocultural, or standardized assumptions that ignore learner diversity. Nigar et al. (2024) argue for a democratic and responsive English curriculum that values multilingual backgrounds, intercultural capabilities, and lived experiences. This principle is decisive for future English teachers, who must be prepared to work with diverse learners, adapt instruction, scaffold learning, design inclusive assessment, and recognize English as a social and cultural practice.

Chapter III therefore closes the book's main academic sequence by showing that the formation of English teachers requires the integration of linguistics, TEFL practice, and curriculum design. Linguistics explains the nature of language; TEFL strategies organize teaching practice; curriculum design gives institutional coherence to both. The curriculum is the space where knowledge, methodology, assessment, professional identity, inclusion, and quality assurance converge. For this reason, curriculum design must be understood not as a bureaucratic requirement, but as the academic structure through which institutions define the English teacher they intend to form, organize the learning path that makes that formation possible, verify evidence of achievement, and renew the program in response to changing educational realities.

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Overview:

This book offers an integral approach to English teacher education, connecting linguistic foundations, TEFL strategies, and curriculum design. It examines how future teachers can understand language, teach it effectively, integrate technologies, assess competencies, and design coherent curricula for higher education, responding to contemporary academic, professional, intercultural, and digital demands.



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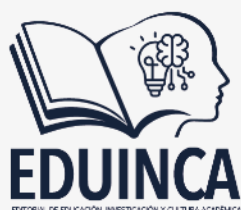
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