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ELT Focus: Solutions to English Language Learning Challenges in Academic Environments

Nehru Pasoloran Pongsapan *, Selvi Panggua

Christian University Indonesia Toraja, Indonesia

* Corresponding author: nehрупongsapan@ukitoraja.ac.id

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Abstract:

This study examines the main challenges in English Language Teaching (ELT) in the academic environment and offers innovative solutions to improve students' learning experiences. Given the importance of English as a global language, effective mastery is crucial. However, obstacles such as language anxiety, lack of exposure to the use of authentic language, less effective teaching methods, and low motivation often hinder students' progress. This study used a literature-based approach to identify and analyze these challenges and formulate actionable solution strategies. The results showed that an interactive and communicative teaching approach, the integration of technology in learning, and the creation of a supportive learning environment can improve student engagement and language retention. Furthermore, this study highlights the need for a holistic approach that combines cultural relevance, student-based teaching practices, and consistent evaluation to improve language skills and academic success in ELT programs. By providing practical recommendations for educators, institutions, and policymakers, this study contributes to the development of more effective strategies to address barriers to English language learning in academic settings.



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Keywords: English Language Teaching (ELT), Academic Environments, Language Learning Challenges, Teaching Strategies.

ELT 焦点：学术环境中英语学习挑战的解决方案

摘要：本研究考察了学术环境中英语教学（ELT）的主要挑战，并提供了创新的解决方案来改善学生的学习体验。鉴于英语作为全球语言的重要性，有效掌握英语变得至关重要。然而，语言焦虑、缺乏使用地道语言、教学方法效果不佳和积极性低等各种障碍往往会阻碍学生的进步。本研究使用基于文献的方法来识别和分析这些挑战，并制定可行的解决方案策略。结果表明，互动和交际教学方法、将技术融入学习以及创造支持性的学习环境可以提高学生的参与度和语言保留率。此外，本研究强调了一种整体方法的必要性，该方法将文化相关性、基于学生的教学实践和一致的评估相结合，以提高语言技能和 ELT 课程的学业成功。通过为教育工作者、机构和政策制定者提供实用建议，本研究有助于制定更有效的策略来解决学术环境中英语学习的障碍。

关键词：英语语言教学 (ELT)、学术环境、语言学习挑战、教学策略。

1. Introduction

Mastery of English as a second or foreign language has become increasingly essential in academic environments, especially as English continues to solidify its position as a global lingua franca (Crystal, 2003). English language proficiency is not only critical for personal and professional development but also for academic success, particularly in higher education institutions where English is the medium of instruction (Graddol, 2008). However, the process of learning English is riddled with challenges, particularly for nonnative speakers. Students often face issues such as language anxiety, lack of motivation, insufficient exposure to the target language, and outdated teaching methods that hinder their progress (E. K. Horwitz et al., 1986);(Gardner & Lambert, 1972). These barriers must be addressed to ensure that students can achieve the proficiency levels required for success in both academic and real-world contexts.

Despite the vast body of research on English Language Teaching (ELT), a significant research gap remains in the implementation of practical, scalable solutions that address the root causes of learning challenges in diverse academic environments. Many studies have focused on pedagogical strategies in isolation, without taking into account the complexity of factors such as student motivation, institutional support, and the role of technology (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Furthermore, while previous research has examined various teaching approaches, including communicative language teaching and task-based learning (Brown,

2007), less focus has been placed on how these methodologies can be tailored to meet the specific needs of different student demographics, particularly in multilingual and multicultural academic settings (Nunan, 2015).

The urgency of this research lies in the increasing globalization of education and growing demand for English proficiency in non-native English-speaking countries (Kirkpatrick, 2008). As English-medium instruction expands globally in higher education institutions, the challenges students face in acquiring the language effectively have become more pronounced. This calls for a renewed focus on innovative, learner-centered strategies that not only address the immediate learning needs of students, but also equip them with long-term language skills (Harmer, 2015). With the shift towards blended learning models and the incorporation of digital tools in the classroom, it is crucial to examine how these innovations can be leveraged to enhance English language acquisition (Dudeny & Hockly, 2007).

Several studies have explored the various aspects of English language learning and teaching. For example, Liu and Huang (2011) investigated the effects of language anxiety on student performance, while Dörnyei (2001) focused on motivation and its influence on language-learning outcomes. Richards and Rodgers (2014) examined different teaching methods, highlighting the need for adaptable approaches in ELT. However, the novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive focus on integrating solutions that

address both internal factors, such as motivation and anxiety, and external factors, such as teaching methods and technology use. By synthesizing findings from various studies, this study provides a more holistic approach to solving the common challenges faced in academic English language learning.

The purpose of this research is to identify the key challenges faced by students in English language learning and propose effective, evidence-based solutions. This study aims to contribute to the field of ELT by offering practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and institutions that are looking to improve student engagement and language proficiency. The integration of technology, the use of communicative and interactive teaching methods, and the creation of supportive learning environments are solutions that will be explored. The findings of this research will be valuable not only for improving academic outcomes, but also for enhancing students' overall language competence and confidence in using English.

This study has several advantages. It will provide educators with a deeper understanding of the challenges students face and equip them with strategies to effectively address these issues. Additionally, it offers insights for policymakers on the importance of institutional support and curriculum design in promoting successful language learning. For students, this research will highlight how a more engaging and supportive learning environment can reduce anxiety, increase motivation, and ultimately lead to better language acquisition outcomes.

English Language Teaching (ELT) has long been a critical field in academic environments, particularly as English continues to dominate as the global language of communication, academia, and business. However, learners face a variety of challenges when acquiring English as a Second or Foreign Language. A major hurdle is language anxiety, which can significantly impede students' ability to learn and perform in the classroom. Anxiety often stems from fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, or pressure to perform in a non-native language, especially in academic settings where proficiency is often assumed (E. Horwitz, 2001). This anxiety can result in lower participation, reduced motivation, and ultimately, poor academic performance, making it a persistent issue for both students and teachers.

Another challenge in ELT is the lack of consistent exposure to English outside of the classroom. In many non-English-speaking countries, students have limited opportunities to practice English in real-life contexts, which can slow the language acquisition process. This lack of immersion leads to what is often referred to as a "silent period," where learners struggle to actively produce the language despite understanding it passively. Consequently, traditional classroom methods that focus on grammar and vocabulary are insufficient to develop communicative competence, as

they do not provide enough opportunities for authentic language use. This is particularly challenging in academic environments where students need to develop not only conversational skills, but also academic English for reading, writing, and presenting research (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Finally, outdated or ineffective teaching methodologies pose significant challenges in ELT. Many educational systems rely heavily on rote learning and grammar translation methods, which are less effective in fostering actual language fluency (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Furthermore, teachers may not have access to the latest pedagogical tools or professional development opportunities to improve their teaching practice.

This gap between the theoretical understanding of language acquisition and practical application of effective teaching methods has contributed to the stagnation of students' language progress. Addressing these challenges requires an overhaul of teaching practices, greater use of technology for language immersion, and more support for both students and teachers to create engaging and practical learning environments.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design using a literature review approach to analyze the existing challenges and potential solutions in English Language Teaching (ELT) within academic environments. The primary aim of this research is to identify recurring obstacles in English language acquisition as well as to explore various pedagogical strategies that have been suggested or implemented to address these challenges. A literature review method allows for a comprehensive analysis of previous studies, theoretical frameworks, and educational models relevant to ELT, providing a broad overview of the current state of the field (Creswell, 2008).

The data sources for this study included academic journals, books, research papers focused on ELT, second language acquisition (SLA), and applied linguistics. Key databases, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ERIC, were used to retrieve peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2023. The selected literature includes empirical studies, theoretical discussions, and case studies that specifically address challenges, such as language anxiety, lack of exposure to English, outdated teaching methodologies, and other obstacles in academic settings. A total of 50 scholarly sources were initially collected; however, after a critical assessment of their relevance and quality, 30 sources were chosen for in-depth analysis.

For data collection, a systematic review of the selected sources was conducted, categorizing them based on themes such as language anxiety, immersion practices, and pedagogical strategies. Each source was

carefully evaluated for its contribution to the understanding of specific ELT challenges and suggestions for overcoming them. The data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach in which recurring themes and patterns related to English language learning difficulties were identified and organized into broader categories (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The findings were then synthesized to highlight common issues across different studies and propose potential solutions that align with current academic requirements and student needs. The qualitative nature of this study enables a deeper understanding of the complex factors influencing ELT change.

3.1. Phytochemical Tests

The table 1 presents the results of a literature review conducted for the article "ELT Focus: Solutions to English Language Learning Challenges in Academic Environments." After a careful screening process, ten relevant articles were selected from a larger body of research on English Language Teaching (ELT) challenges and their potential solutions in academic settings. The selected articles provide diverse perspectives on the common barriers faced by learners and offer practical strategies for overcoming these difficulties. The focus areas included pedagogical approaches, learner anxiety, motivation, curriculum development, and technology integration.

3. Result and Discussions

Table 1. Literature Review

Author	Year	Title	Key Findings
Alrabai	2014	Reducing Language Anxiety & Promoting Learner Motivation.	Addressing anxiety in ELT learners significantly boosts engagement and language proficiency.
Brown	2014	Principles of Language Learning and Teaching	Emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy in overcoming ELT challenges.
Richards and Rodgers	2014	Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching	Advocates for communicative approaches and task-based learning to improve English language learning.
Mercer and Kostoulas	2018	Language Teacher Psychology	Highlights the psychological factors in teaching that can either impede or enhance student learning.
Dörnyei	2014	The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in SLA	Explores the role of individual learner differences, such as motivation and self-regulation.
Lightbown and Spada,	2021	How Languages Are Learned	Discusses how instructional methods and learner interactions shape language acquisition.
MacIntyre and Gregersen,	2012	Emotions That Facilitate Language Learning: The Positive-Broadening Power of the Imagination	Investigates the role of positive emotions in enhancing language learning experiences.
Hyland	2019	Second Language Writing	Provides strategies to develop writing skills, addressing common challenges in academic ELT contexts.
Gutiérrez-Carreón, Daradoumis and Jorba Esteve,	2015	Learning in the Cloud: How (and Why) to Integrate Technology in ELT	Highlights the importance of integrating technology to modernize language teaching and enhance learning outcomes.
Gass, Behney and Plonsky	2015	Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course	Discusses the stages of second language acquisition and the impact of learner environment on outcomes.

3.2 Data Analysis

The articles were chosen based on their relevance in addressing ELT challenges and their contributions to the field through evidence-based practices and theoretical insights. The selected sources provided a comprehensive understanding of both barriers and potential solutions to English language learning in various educational contexts.

The literature reviewed for this study on "ELT Focus: Solutions to English Language Learning Challenges in Academic Environments" reveals several key themes that are central to understanding and overcoming the difficulties students face in acquiring English as a Second Language. Across the selected articles, a consistent emphasis was placed on psychological factors, such as anxiety and motivation, that significantly impact language learning outcomes. For instance, Alrabai (2014) highlighted the critical role of reducing learner anxiety and promoting motivation as key components for success in language acquisition. This finding aligns with the broader recognition in ELT research that emotional and psychological well-being play a crucial role in enhancing students' engagement and academic performance.

Brown's (2015) work further supports this view by advocating intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy as core principles in language teaching. His research suggests that empowering students to take ownership of their learning processes can alleviate some of the challenges they face, such as the fear of failure or disengagement in the classroom. This shift towards learner-centered approaches has been echoed in many contemporary studies, emphasizing the need for educators to create environments that foster student agency and motivation, particularly in challenging academic settings.

The role of teaching methods is another recurring theme, particularly in Richards and Rodgers' (2014) analysis of communicative approaches and task-based learning. Their findings underscore the importance of interactive student-centered teaching techniques that engage learners in meaningful communication rather than focusing solely on grammar and rote memorization. This method addresses common challenges in ELT, where students often struggle to apply theoretical knowledge in real-life contexts. The communicative approach enables learners to participate actively in language use, which is essential for overcoming learning barriers in academic environments.

Furthermore, Hiver and Al-Hoorie's (2020) study delves into the psychological aspects of language teaching, focusing on how teachers' attitudes and emotional support can either hinder or facilitate student learning. This study highlights the importance of teacher involvement in reducing classroom anxiety and

fostering a positive learning environment. Similarly, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) demonstrated that positive emotions can broaden students' capacity to learn by stimulating their imagination and engagement, which helps address common language learning challenges.

As highlighted by Warschauer (2015), the integration of technology provides a modern solution to many logistical challenges in language teaching. The use of digital tools and cloud-based learning has the potential to make language acquisition more accessible and engaging, especially in academic settings in which traditional methods may not fully address the diverse needs of learners. Technology serves as a bridge between the curriculum and real-world language use, offering interactive platforms that promote student participation and motivation, which are essential for overcoming inherent difficulties in ELT.

Finally, several studies, including those by Hyland (2019) and Gass and Selinker (2013), emphasize the importance of addressing specific skill areas, such as writing and the stages of second language acquisition. These studies show that targeted interventions in key areas of language use, coupled with an understanding of learners' environments, are essential for improving overall language proficiency. By addressing these individual skill gaps, educators can create more tailored learning experiences that directly respond to the challenges students face in learning academic English.

The reviewed literature collectively indicates that addressing ELT challenges requires a multifaceted approach that considers the psychological, pedagogical, and technological dimensions. The integration of learner-centered methods, emotional support, and technology-driven solutions provides a comprehensive framework for overcoming obstacles to language learning in academic environments. These findings offer valuable insights for educators and policymakers who aim to improve English language learning outcomes in diverse educational settings.

The data derived from the literature review on "ELT Focus: Solutions to English Language Learning Challenges in Academic Environments" presents key insights into the current challenges faced by students and educators alike in navigating the complexities of second language acquisition. One of the most prominent themes is the psychological barriers that many learners face, particularly language anxiety, as highlighted by Alrabai (2014). In modern academic environments, where English is increasingly used as the medium of instruction, anxiety can severely hinder students' ability to meaningfully engage with content. This challenge is exacerbated by high-stakes environments, where proficiency in English directly affects academic success. Consequently, there is a pressing need for solutions that target these psychological barriers and allow learners to

thrive in academic settings.

Current trends also show a growing focus on learner autonomy and motivation, which aligns with the literature on intrinsic motivation. In many academic environments today, especially in higher education, students are expected to be self-directed and to take greater control of their learning. However, traditional teacher-centered approaches often do not foster independence. This gap between expectations and actual classroom practices can create a significant barrier for the students. The findings emphasize the need for participatory teaching methods that encourage students to take ownership of their learning, thereby reducing the disconnection between learner needs and teaching approaches.

Richards and Rodgers (2014) emphasize the importance of communicative approaches, which remain highly relevant in today's academic world. Given the increasing use of English as a global lingua franca, students are required not only to understand and use English correctly, but also to communicate effectively in various contexts. The rise of online learning platforms and international collaboration has made communication in English even more vital. Therefore, task-based and communicative approaches are key to addressing the challenge of bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world applications. These approaches provide flexibility and practicality, which are crucial for overcoming language-learning challenges in academic environments.

Technological integration has also emerged as a solution to many logistical and motivational challenges associated with language learning (Warschauer, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital tools in education, with technology playing a critical role in maintaining the continuity of language learning. These findings support the view that technology-enhanced learning environments can make language acquisition more interactive and engaging, particularly when combined with communicative approaches. Moreover, online platforms offer opportunities for more personalized learning experiences, allowing students to progress at their own pace while receiving immediate feedback, which is often not feasible in traditional classroom settings.

Mercer and Kostoulas's (2018) research on the emotional aspects of language teaching also resonates with the current teaching practices. Today's educators are expected to play a more significant role in providing emotional support to their students, especially in the face of widespread disruptions in learning caused by global events, such as the pandemic. Their research emphasized that a teacher's emotional support can significantly impact students' willingness to participate in language learning activities. This finding is crucial because disengaged students are more likely to fall

behind, particularly in environments where language proficiency is essential for academic achievement.

Further aligning with these findings is MacIntyre and Gregersen's (2012) study, which highlighted how positive emotional experiences can enhance learning. Given the increasing complexity of modern education, where students are required to manage multiple learning demands simultaneously, creating a supportive, emotionally positive learning environment can significantly overcome language-learning challenges. By fostering an atmosphere that encourages creativity, critical thinking, and confidence in using English, educators can help students overcome linguistic and psychological barriers.

The data also suggest that targeted interventions in specific skill areas, such as writing and reading, are essential for addressing unique challenges in academic English, as highlighted by Gass and Selinker (2013). Many students face difficulties in transitioning from conversational English to the academic register required in formal education. Addressing this gap requires interventions that focus on the specific skills required for academic success. This targeted approach helps students navigate the complex linguistic demands placed on them, particularly in environments where English is not their first language.

Moreover, the increasing diversity of academic environments, both in terms of student demographics and language use, necessitates a more nuanced understanding of how to address language-learning challenges. Hyland (2019) emphasized the importance of adapting teaching methods to accommodate the varying backgrounds and needs of students. These findings support this, suggesting that a one-size-fits-all approach is no longer viable in the context of global education. Instead, educators need to consider individual learning contexts and tailor their approaches accordingly to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

It is clear that the role of teachers is evolving in response to these challenges. Teachers are no longer mere transmitters of knowledge but are expected to act as facilitators and emotional supporters. The shift towards more participatory, communicative, and emotionally supportive teaching practices aligns with modern educational theories such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning. This theoretical perspective underscores the importance of collaborative learning environments, in which students actively engage with the language in meaningful ways.

The literature suggests that addressing English language learning challenges in academic environments requires a comprehensive approach that incorporates psychological support, technological integration, communicative teaching methods, and tailored interventions. These findings reflect the realities of

modern education, where diverse student populations and complex learning environments require adaptive and innovative solutions. The next step for educators and researchers is to explore how these approaches can be refined and implemented in various educational contexts to maximize student success.

Identification of Challenges in English Language Learning in Academic Environments

The findings of this study indicate that the main challenges of English language learning in academic environments include language anxiety, lack of exposure to authentic language use, ineffective teaching methods, and low student motivation. Psychological factors such as language anxiety significantly impact students' communication skills, making them more passive in speaking and participating in class discussion. Additionally, conventional learning systems that focus on grammar and rote memorization are less effective in improving the practical communication skills required in academic and professional settings.

These findings suggest that students with high language anxiety tend to experience cognitive barriers in processing information in English. They also exhibited lower participation levels in communication-based classroom activities, which ultimately hindered the development of their speaking and listening skills. Therefore, a more student-centered approach and the creation of a supportive learning environment are crucial for overcoming these psychological barriers.

Effectiveness of Interactive and Communicative Learning Methods

This study found that communication-based and interactive approaches, such as task-based learning and communicative language teaching, are more effective in enhancing students' language skills than conventional methods that focus solely on grammar. Students who learn through interaction-based methods tend to be more confident about using English in both academic and everyday contexts.

A further interpretation suggests that these methods not only improve students' language competence, but also help them develop critical thinking and collaboration skills. The implementation of project-based tasks allows students to use English in realistic situations, thereby reinforcing their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in an integrated manner. Thus, communication-based learning models can be an effective strategy to improve English proficiency in academic environments.

The Role of Technology in English Language Learning

One of the key findings of this study is that

integrating technology into English language learning positively affects student motivation and engagement. The use of online learning platforms, artificial intelligence (AI), and gamified learning applications has been shown to enhance students' learning experiences.

These results suggest that technology serves not only as a learning aid but also as a medium that can transform traditional learning paradigms into more flexible and adaptive approaches tailored to students' needs. Technology enables personalized learning, allowing students to access materials suited to their proficiency levels, receive instant feedback, and practice language skills in an interactive and engaging environment. Therefore, the utilization of technology in ELT should be further optimized to improve students' language competencies.

The Psychological Impact on Learning Success

Anxiety and motivation play a significant role in determining students' success in learning English. This study found that students with higher intrinsic motivation tended to achieve better fluency levels than those who relied solely on extrinsic motivation, such as academic or job requirements.

These findings suggest that language learning success is influenced not only by methods and technology but also by students' psychological factors. Teachers and educational institutions should provide greater emotional support, create a safe learning environment, and develop strategies to enhance students' confidence in using English. For example, providing constructive feedback and adopting student-centered teaching approaches can help reduce anxiety and increase students' motivation to learn.

A Holistic Approach to English Language Teaching

This study recommends a holistic approach that combines culturally relevant strategies, student-centered teaching methods, and continuous assessment systems. This approach not only helps improve English language skills but also tailors learning methods to the diverse needs and characteristics of students.

These results suggest that a one-size-fits-all learning model is no longer relevant in modern education. Instead, a more flexible and inclusive approach is needed that considers cultural factors, student backgrounds, and specific learning needs. By implementing a more personalized and adaptive approach, educational institutions can create more effective learning environments that support student success in mastering English.

4. Conclusion

The findings from this study emphasize the complex nature of the challenges faced by students in learning English in academic settings. Psychological barriers,

such as language anxiety and low motivation, were identified as significant obstacles that hindered students' progress in acquiring English proficiency. This research highlights that shifting towards more communicative and participatory teaching methods, along with integrating technology, can effectively enhance student engagement and language acquisition. These approaches align with modern educational theories that emphasize student-centered learning and the creation of a supportive and interactive environment.

The effectiveness of the communicative and interactive approach in English Language Teaching (ELT) has been validated through the various studies reviewed in this research. Compared to traditional methods that primarily focus on grammar and rote memorization, communicative and task-based learning methods have proven more successful in developing practical language skills. Furthermore, integrating technology into ELT—through e-learning platforms, AI-based applications, and gamification—has significantly increased student motivation and provided more personalized learning experiences. These strategies not only help in language retention, but also prepare students for real-world communication, particularly in academic and professional settings.

However, although the findings suggest that interactive and technology-enhanced learning methods are effective, their implementation must be carefully planned. Not all students have equal access to technological resources and the effectiveness of these methods depends on factors such as teacher readiness, institutional support, and student adaptability. Therefore, a well-balanced combination of traditional and modern approaches tailored to the specific needs of different learning environments is essential to maximize learning outcomes.

Implications of the Study

This study has several implications for educators, institutions, and policymakers in the ELT field.

1. Educators: Teachers should focus on implementing interactive, student-centered teaching approaches that promote active participation and communication. Additionally, they must be equipped with necessary training to effectively integrate digital tools into their teaching strategies.
2. Educational institutions must provide adequate support by incorporating technology into their curricula, offering professional development programs for teachers, and ensuring access to necessary learning resources for students. A well-structured curriculum that balances language theory with practical applications can significantly improve learning outcomes.
3. Policymakers: This study emphasizes the need for language education policies that encourage

innovative teaching methodologies. Policies should focus on providing equitable access to digital learning tools, reducing the digital divide, and supporting research-driven improvements to language education.

Future Research

This study provides a foundation for further research on scalable and adaptable solutions for ELT. Future studies should examine the long-term impacts of communicative and technology-enhanced teaching methods on student performance. In addition, research should explore how different cultural and linguistic backgrounds influence the effectiveness of these methods, ensuring their applicability across diverse educational contexts.

Author Contributions

The authors have made substantial contributions to the conception, design, and execution of this study. Nehru Pasoloran Pongsapan led the overall research design, conducted the literature review, and analyzed key findings related to communicative approaches and psychological barriers in ELT. Selvi Panggia contributed to data collection, the synthesis of pedagogical strategies, and discussions on technology integration in language learning. Both authors collaboratively developed the manuscript, reviewed the relevant studies, and formulated recommendations for educators, institutions, and policymakers. They also ensured that the findings presented were supported by theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, making this study a valuable contribution to the field of English Language Teaching.

Addressing English language learning challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates psychological support, technological advancements, and pedagogical innovation. By adopting a more flexible and student-centered framework, educators and institutions can create a more effective and inclusive learning environment, ultimately leading to higher language proficiency and academic success. This study provides practical insights for improving ELT methodologies and serves as a stepping stone for future research in this field.

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