




Paper Type: Original Article

Management Strategies in English Teaching Methodologies-a Bibliometric Analysis of Communicative Language Teaching

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Citation:

Received: 06 March 2023

Revised: 20 August 2023

Accepted: 10 November 2023

Chen, H. K. (2024). Management strategies in english teaching methodologies-a bibliometric analysis of communicative language teaching. *Management analytics and social insights*, 1(1), 59-69.

Abstract

In the contemporary era of globalization, the significance of the english language has become paramount, necessitating a heightened focus on english education and the refinement of teaching methodologies for enhanced efficiency. This study employs the bibliometric tool VOSviewer to analyze 8,863 and 484 publications about the english teaching method and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), respectively, spanning the past 50 years. Leveraging extensive literature data from the Scopus database, the researcher first provides a comprehensive overview of the keywords' contextual landscape. The subsequent categorization includes: 1) publishing countries, 2) publishing authors, 3) publication keyword ranking and 4) the top ten and top five cited related literature. Finally, the researcher presents conclusive findings and recommendations for future research endeavours in english teaching methodology. This paper contributes valuable insights into the evolving landscape of english language education, offering a foundation for further scholarly exploration.

Keywords: English teaching methods, Communicative language teaching, Bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer.

1 | Introduction

As globalization accelerates, the demand for global communication and interpersonal interaction increases significantly. The international language of english makes people communicate easily, and english education thus shall be improved. To meet the needs of multinational corporations and international government agencies for proficient english employees, english teachers should adjust their teaching plans and focus on cultivating language skills, cultural understanding, and communication abilities. This adjustment of teaching methods reflects the market demand and shows the educators' emphasis on cultivating students' effective communication skills in a multicultural environment [1].

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In addition, the concept of english learning also changes. In the context of today's knowledge explosion and educational diversity, english education is no longer just a process of guiding students to recite. Students nowadays use various electronic resources, such as tablets, e-books, and Computer-Based Testing (CBT), to learn english, which makes them no longer satisfied with simple factual memory. Therefore, english teachers need to integrate various teaching methods and explore new teaching strategies to improve teaching efficiency; they may, for example, appropriately utilize computer-assisted teaching systems for teaching assistance to improve students' comprehensive english ability [2].

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an efficient english teaching method. CLT mainly emphasizes the practical use of language and the cultivation of communication skills [3]. For the last few years, the world has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and people hardly communicate face to face, resulting in less efficiency in connecting [4], [5]. This study listed english teaching method and CLT as the keywords and grasped the relevant literature data from the globally renowned Scopus database over the past 50 years. The research further analyzed these massive data through the VOSviewer bibliometric tool to the two categories of 1) the number of publications and their citation status of each country and 2) the occurrence frequency and association strength of each keyword.

Through these analyses, this study achieves three purposes: 1) providing the publication situation and its related context of english teaching method in the past 50 years, 2) presenting the publication situation and its related context of CLT for the past 50 years, 3) offering relevant suggestions for future research on the topic of english teaching method.

2 | English Teaching Method

The research on english teaching methods can be traced back to the 19th century. By then, the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was a popular teaching method, mainly used for teaching Latin and Greek and constantly used for english teaching. This GTM method emphasizes learning grammar rules and vocabulary memorization and translating L2 into L1 or L1 into L2 [6]-[7]. In addition, Canadian scholar Gardner and his research team proposed a motivation theory in the 1970s. It was particularly applicable to explaining the phenomenon of foreign language learning and profoundly impacted the research of foreign language learning motivation. Gardner's theory mainly focuses on learners' motivation to study a second language, especially the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation [6].

This study used the Scopus database to collect publications of journal articles with the issues of "article title, abstract, keywords: english teaching method published in english from 1972 to 2022. A total of 8,863 publications were analyzed. Among these publications, the number one is article, with 5,992 articles; the second is conference paper, with 1,593 articles; the third is Review, with 517 articles. In addition, the top three fields of these publications are 1) the social sciences field, with 5,324 articles, 2) the arts and humanities field, with 2,415 articles and 3) the computer science field, with 2,005 articles. It is especially noted that these publication fields have overlapping calculations, so the sum of the top three ranks is more significant than 8,863 articles.

The study researcher used VOSviewer_1.6.20 to proceed with bibliometric analysis on the above 8,863 publications and summarize the top 20 countries and their publication numbers of english teaching method publications over the past five decades, as shown in *Table 1*. *Fig. 1* is the association index of the top 20 countries of english teaching method journals in the past 50 years.

Table 1. The top 20 countries and their publication numbers in “english teaching method” journals.

S/N.	Country	Documents	Citations
1	China	1401	3616
2	United States	320	1680
3	Indonesia	208	633
4	United Kindom	186	1415
5	Malaysia	162	585
6	Iran	151	660
7	Russian Federation	138	307
8	Saudi Arabia	136	423
9	Australia	112	793
10	India	101	324
11	Spain	100	740
12	Turkey	97	619
13	Thailand	89	253
14	Canada	69	468
15	South Africa	61	203
16	Vietnam	61	202
17	Taiwan	57	346
18	Japan	50	197
19	Ukraine	50	121
20	Hong Kong	49	396

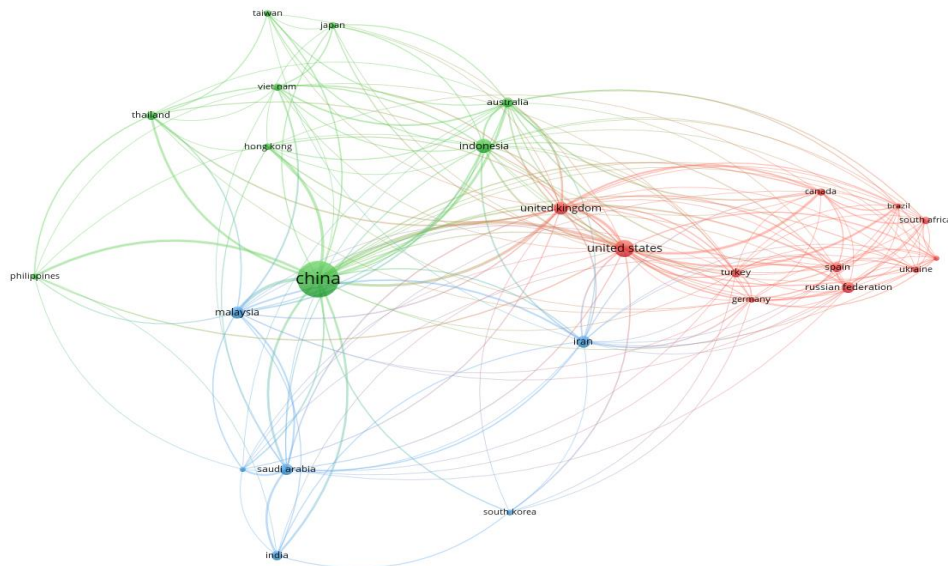


Fig. 1. “english teaching method” publication’s top 20 countries association index.

Table 2 shows that VOSviewer analysis shows that the top 20 keywords' occurrences and total link strength are related to the research. The keyword teaching has the highest occurrences and total link strength, followed by the study on students, and the third is the research with the keyword human. The keyword context association of the english teaching method publications in the past 50 years is shown in Fig. 2.

Table 2. The top 20 keywords of “english teaching method” publications.

S/N.	Keyword	Occurrences	Total Link Strength
1	Teaching	1127	7206
2	Students	784	4809
3	Human	470	4396
4	English Teaching	452	2439
5	E-Learning	363	2090
6	Humans	361	3533
7	Learning Systems	329	2009
8	Teaching Methods	260	1486
9	Article	240	2413
10	College english	236	1461
11	Learning	211	1923
12	Curricula	200	1695
13	Education	200	1241
14	Female	196	2125
15	Engineering education	192	1185
16	Education computing	185	1272
17	College english teachings	174	1938
18	Male	174	1129
19	Adult	164	1762
20	Big Data	156	880

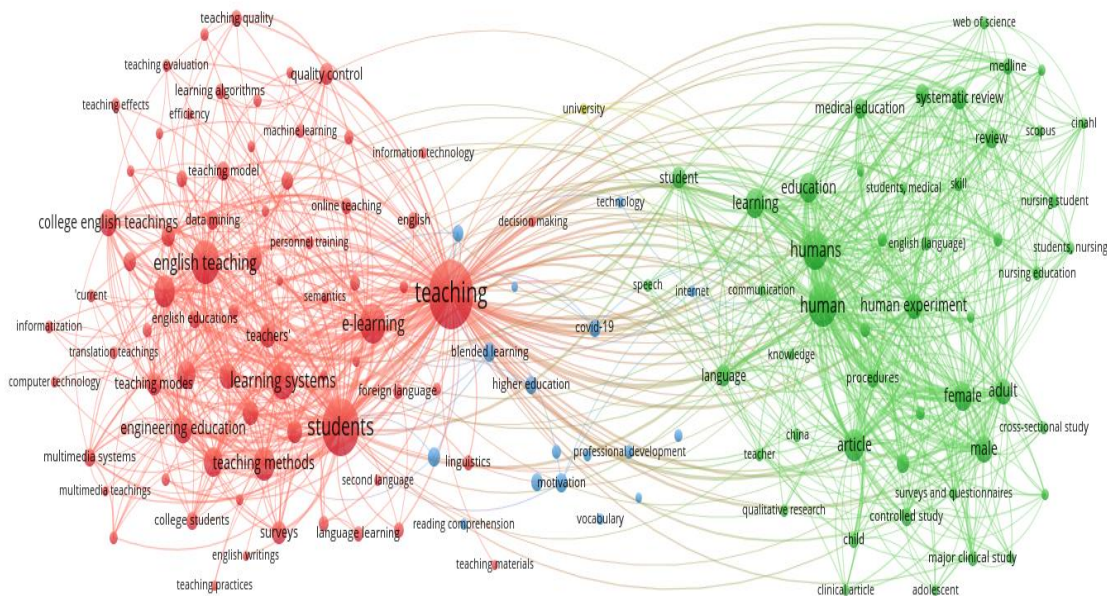


Fig. 2. The keywords context association of the publications on english teaching method.

According to the VOSviewer bibliometric analysis tool analysis, *Fig. 3* shows the strength of the most cited publications on "english teaching method"; the brighter the author, the more times they are mentioned. Regarding the top 10 most cited articles on "english teaching method" in the past 50 years, this study compiled the author's information and the main points of these ten articles, as shown in *Table 3*.

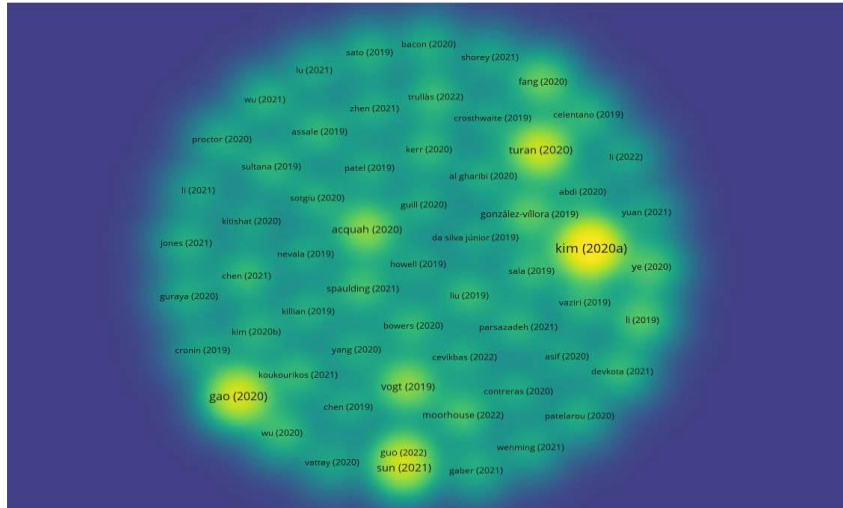


Fig. 3. The keywords context association of the publications on “english teaching method”.

Table 3. Top 10 most cited papers on “english teaching method”.

S/N.	Author	Research Perspectives
1	Kim and Asbury [7]	The main point of the paper: This study pointed out the challenges faced by UK teachers in the early stages of the COVID-19 lockdown. Teachers shifted to remote teaching quickly and sought solutions in uncertainty. They paid particular attention to disadvantaged students and emphasized the support of interpersonal relationships. The study called for clear guidance and support from the government to assist teachers and students cope with future challenges. These findings provided a basis for further research on how UK teachers experienced the pandemic. The discovery of this study presents the fundamental elements of solutions for english teachers to face and overcome these obstacles.
2	Gao and Zhang [8]	The main point of the paper: This study explored the perceptions of online teaching among the foreign language teachers of Chinese universities during the COVID-19 outbreak periods. Through in-depth interviews, it was found that teachers clearly understood the characteristics, advantages, and limitations of online teaching, and teachers enhanced their information and communication technology literacy by understanding student demands and practising and integrating traditional teaching methods. The study provided pedagogical implications for similar educational contexts encountering the same challenges.
3	Turan and Akdag-Cimen [9]	The paper's main point: This study conducted a systematic review to examine the trends and main findings of the flipped classroom approach in english language teaching. The study researcher analyzed 43 articles and found that the flipped classroom approach has received increasing attention in english language teaching since 2014 and has rapidly risen in the past two years. The study noted that the flipped classroom approach significantly improved speaking proficiencies and writing techniques. It also showed the challenges and highlighted the benefits of implementing this teaching method. Conclusions and suggestions for future practice and study were explained.
4	Sun et al. [10]	The paper's main point: This study developed an online intelligent english teaching platform based on artificial intelligence technology. The system utilized a system called “in-depth learning assistance” by combining it with the “decision tree algorithm” and “neural network” to create a modern tool platform to improve students’ english proficiencies. This system also reflected the idea of an artificial intelligence expert system. It proved to help students improve their learning efficiency and make the learning content more helpful through this testing application.

Table 3. Continuation.

5	Vogt et al. [11]	The paper's main point: This large-scale study investigated the effects of using social robots for foreign language teaching. The study included seven lessons aimed at helping children learn english vocabulary. The results showed that the children's retention of vocabulary learned through robot tutors was similar to that of using only tablet applications and that the robot's symbolic gestures had no significant impact on learning gains.
6	Acquah and Katz [12]	The paper's main point: Through a systematic literature review, this study evaluated the empirical evidence of the effects of digital games on second language learning outcomes for students aged 6 to 18. After analyzing 26 articles, it was found that digital learning games can facilitate language acquisition, affective/psychological states, contemporary skills, and engagement behaviours. The game features were related to the learning outcomes, indicating that digital games are effective teaching tools. However, future research still needs to explore how to best implement them in the classroom.
7	Fang and Liu [13]	The paper's main point: This study explored the viewpoints and practices of using and treating cross-language mixing in Chinese universities. The study found that students had neutral to positive attitudes toward cross-language mixing, while teachers had different opinions and practices. Most teachers believed that cross-language mixing benefited content learning, especially for students with lower english proficiency. The study suggested that systematic and contextualized cross-language teaching strategies must be developed, and teachers and students should embrace a multilingual perspective.
8	Gonzalez-Villora et al. [14]	The paper's main point: This study conducted a systematic review to evaluate the hybridization of teaching models in physical education from primary to secondary school stages (6 to 18 years old). The study found that the hybridized teaching models determined the learning outcomes, divided into two categories: game-related skills (including game understanding and tactical skills) and psychosocial variables (including psychological, social, and personal development). The study pointed out that hybridizing physical education and sport initiation models was beneficial for the first category of outcomes. In contrast, the hybrid models that included cooperative learning and/or personal and social responsibility teaching were helpful for the second category of outcomes.
9	Li et al. [15]	The paper's main point: This study evaluated the effects of blended learning on nursing students' knowledge, skills, and satisfaction through a meta-analysis. After analyzing eight studies, including 574 students, it was found that compared with traditional teaching, blended learning significantly improved students' knowledge and satisfaction and tended to improve skills, although the difference was not significant. Therefore, blended learning can be an effective teaching method in nursing education.
10	Ye et al. [16]	The main point of the paper: This study conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to evaluate the role of 3D printing models in human anatomy teaching. The results showed that students who used 3D printing models had accuracy and response time advantages compared to traditional teaching. In the anatomy knowledge test, the 3D group students performed no worse than the traditional group. In addition, the 3D printing group students had higher satisfaction with learning.

3 | Communicative Language Teaching

CLT is a second or foreign language teaching method emphasizing the importance of interaction [19-20]. This teaching method was first proposed by the American sociolinguist Dell Hymes. Dell Hymes introduced the concept of communicative competence, the fundamental CLT theory [2], [17].

The Modern Languages Project of 1971 was initiated by the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Co-operation. This council was dedicated to promoting the learning and teaching modern languages and significantly contributed to current language teaching from 1957 to 2001 [18][23]. In the 1970s, it was further developed by David Wilkins, a consultant for the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Co-operation. It

was promoted in the Modern Languages Project of 1971, marking the beginning of the CLT era. David Wilkins contributed to developing CLT in the 1970s [19].

With the Keywords: “CLT”, this study researcher implemented the Scopus database to collect publications journal articles published in the english language from 1987 to 2022; a total of amount of 484 publications were analyzed (also found that the database could not display data from 1972 to 1987). Among these publications, the first one in terms of publication quantity was an article with 306 articles; the second was a Conference Paper with 113 articles; the third was a Book Chapter with 36 articles.

In addition, the top three fields of these publications were 1) Social Sciences, with 360 articles, 2) Arts and Humanities, with 212 articles and 3) computer science, with 106 articles. It should be noted that these publication fields have overlapping calculations, so the sum of the top three ranks is more than 484 articles.

This study used VOSviewer_1.6.20 to perform bibliometric analysis on the above 484 publications and compiled the top 20 countries and their publication quantities of publications on CLT as shown in *Table 4*. *Fig. 4* also shows the association index of the top 20 countries' publications on CLT.

Table 4. The top 20 countries and their publication on CLT.

S/N.	Country	Documents	Citations
1	Russian federation	59	154
2	China	56	311
3	United states	49	1010
4	United kingdom	27	772
5	Malaysia	24	195
6	Australia	22	358
7	Spain	21	230
8	Taiwan	17	200
9	Indonesia	16	24
10	Iran	14	54
11	Saudi Arabia	12	53
12	Hong Kong	11	368
13	South Korea	11	73
14	Ukraine	11	40
15	New Zealand	10	101
16	Thailand	10	48
17	Bangladesh	9	81
18	India	9	19
19	Japan	8	100
20	Canada	7	93

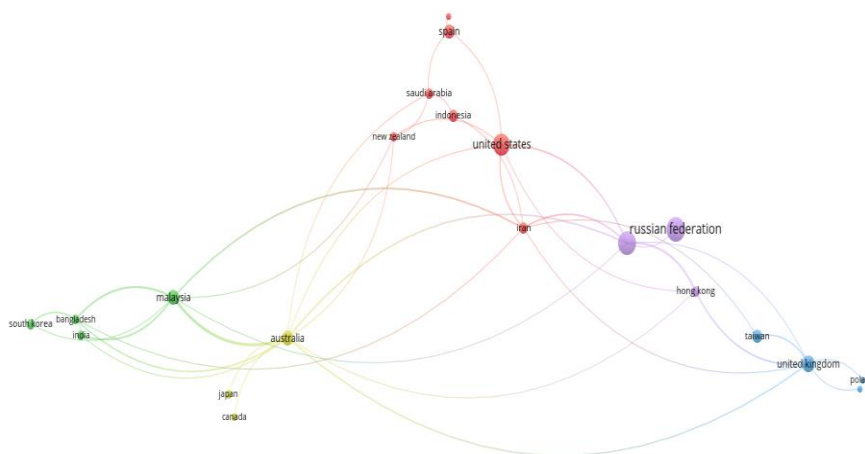


Fig. 4. The association index of the top 20 countries' publications.

From *Table 5*, it can be seen that the researchers used VOSviewer to draw the following conclusions: among the top 10 keywords in terms of occurrences and total link strength, the keyword CLT had the most occurrences in the studies related to occurrences and total link strength, but its “Total Link Strength” was

not the largest. Among these ten keywords, the keyword with the highest total link strength was teaching. Fig. 5 demonstrates the keyword context association of the publications on CLT.

Table 5. The top 10 keywords of publications on CLT.

S/N.	Keyword	Occurrences	Total Link Strength
1	CLT	145	37
2	Teaching	118	204
3	Communicative competence	71	73
4	Communicative competences	69	148
5	Students	67	145
6	Foreign language teaching	48	79
7	Foreign language	42	91
8	CLT	39	15
9	English language teaching	38	49
10	Communicative approach	31	45

According to the VOSviewer bibliometric analysis tool analysis, Fig. 6 shows the author's strength of the most cited publications on CLT; the brighter the author, the more times they are mentioned. In addition, this study compiled the author's information and the main points of the top five most cited articles on CLT, as shown in Table 6.

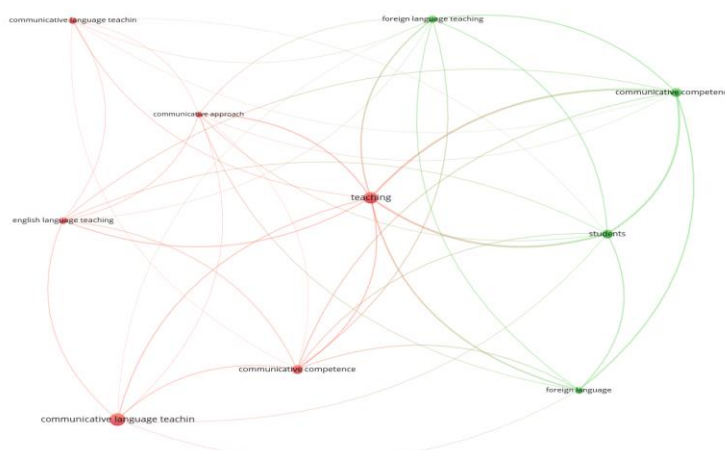


Fig. 5. The keyword context association of publications on CLT.

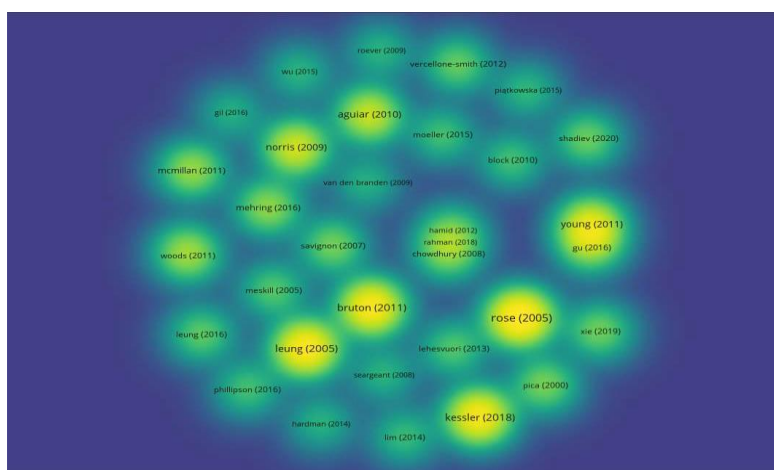


Fig. 6. The keyword context association of the publication.

Table 6. Top five cited papers and their main points of publication.

S/N.	Author	Research Perspectives
1	Rose [20]	Thesis statement: This study investigates the effects of pragmatic instruction in second language teaching. The study shows that pragmatics, despite being an important learning goal, is often neglected in the field of second language acquisition. The paper reviews the relevant literature and discusses the teaching ability of pragmatics, the relative benefits of instruction and exposure, and the differences in outcomes of various teaching methods.
2	Leung [21]	Thesis statement: This study highlights the importance of shifting from grammar-centered teaching to CLT. The paper argues that English teaching should focus on real-world social and cultural developments and reconnect with ethnographic sensibility and perceptiveness after the reform.
3	Bruton [22]	Thesis statement: This study questions the general benefits of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and points out the flaws in Spanish research. It calls for fair research to ensure the well-being of all students.
4	Kessler [23]	Thesis statement: This study explores how technology transforms language teaching, emphasizing the importance of technological trends such as social media, artificial intelligence, etc., and discusses how to use these tools to facilitate language learning.
5	Norris [24]	Thesis statement: This paper examines the application of task-based teaching and testing in language teaching. It presents the theoretical foundation of task-based teaching and discusses how to enhance learners' language proficiency through authentic language use tasks. The paper also discusses the validity of task-based testing and how to design and evaluate learners' performance in completing specific tasks.

4 | Conclusion

With the advent of the knowledge economy era, globalization has profoundly impacted English learning. Professionals and organizations that can use English as a tool for learning and communication are widely regarded as a symbol of personal and corporate success. In addition, under the impetus of the knowledge economy, the popularity of computer and internet technology has also made multimedia an essential tool for learning English. Nowadays, using computers to learn English has become a familiar and irreversible trend, and English teachers must recognize this trend and actively remember to keep up with the times.

This study adopted a large number of literature data, which were collected from the Scopus database for data assessment, and accurately used the VOS-viewer bibliometric analysis tool to analyze the two keywords "English teaching method" and CLT in terms of 1) the situation of publications by countries, 2) the author analysis of publications, 3) the keyword context analysis of publications and 4) the introduction of critical papers. These analyses have achieved the first two objectives of the three primary objectives of this study mentioned in Section 1. The following is the third objective of this study.

This study suggests that subsequent research on the "English teaching method" can be oriented toward teaching methods more aligned with globalization and the post-pandemic era. This study also found that in the past 35 years, research with CLT as the keyword has not attracted many scholars to participate. Still, oral communication is a vital link in practical application. If researchers and teachers can pay more attention to communicative teaching in English teaching, focusing on the learning outcomes brought by interaction, thereby enhancing students' learning motivation and interest, constantly promoting students' motivations to learn English to make significant progress, this will be very beneficial and effective for English education.

Author Contribution

The author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

The study received no funding.

Data Availability

Access to the study data can be obtained through the author's email.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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