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## **REVIEW OF FIVE METHODS USED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

### *Abstract*

*This paper is a review article providing an overview of five methods of English language teaching: Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method, Audiolingual Method, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). For each method, a brief historical background is provided, followed by the aims, principles, techniques, and limitations. Continuous examination of ELT methods is essential because they provide an organized framework for teachers to deliver instructions and knowledge effectively. The choice of teaching method is vital to meet all the requirements of successful language teaching and learning. Additionally, different learning approaches suit different students. Today there are many teaching methods, but this paper will touch on the most significant ones that marked the historical development and beginnings of methods in language teaching and learning. By exploring the features of each method, this paper aims to enhance the understanding of their differences and to provide a critical view of each, in order to inform and assist young English language teachers in evaluating their own teaching practices.*

**Keywords:** English language teaching, teaching methods, English language learning

## Introduction

Language teaching requires specific methods that are important for students to develop language skills and acquire vocabulary and grammar. Methods used in language teaching include a range of instructional approaches and techniques used to facilitate grammar acquisition. Methods are essential because they provide an organized framework for teachers to deliver instructions and knowledge effectively. The choice of teaching method is vital to meet all the requirements of successful language teaching and learning. Today there are many teaching methods, but this paper will touch on the most significant ones that marked the historical development and beginnings of methods in language teaching and learning. The choice of teaching method plays a crucial role in shaping the learning process. Choosing a method is a demanding decision that requires assessing various factors such as teaching goals, student characteristics, and teacher preferences. Faradila et al. (2022) state there is a close connection between the teacher's experience and the choice of teaching method.

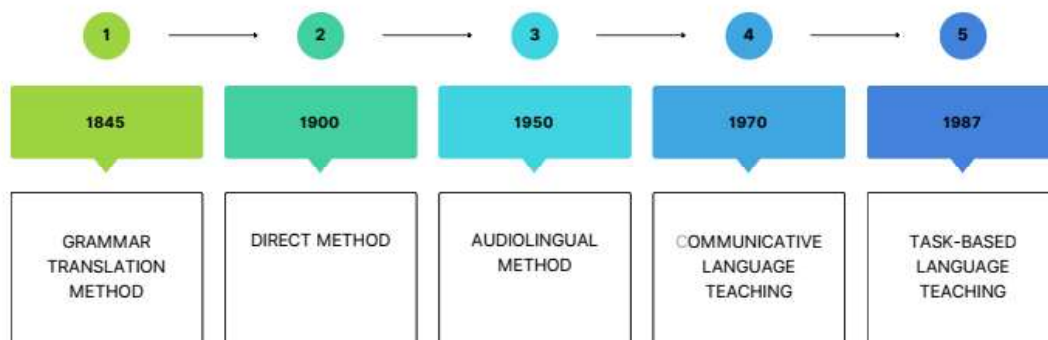


Figure 1. *Teaching methods timeline*

This paper provides an overview of five teaching methods: Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method, Audiolingual Method, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), their historical background, aims, principles, techniques, and limitations. By presenting each of the methods and their instructional techniques,

the paper aims to enhance the understanding of their differences and similarities. To that end, a comparative table was designed illustrating the key features of each method. Additionally, the paper provides a critical view of each method in order to inform and assist young English language teachers in evaluating their own teaching practices. The methods are reviewed as they emerged in the past, as presented in the timeline in Figure 1.

### **Grammar-Translation Method**

The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) is one of the earliest methods that emerged in language learning. Also known as the Prussian method, the Classical method, the Traditional method, the Grammar school method, and the Latin method, GTM was used for teaching classical languages, such as Latin and ancient Greek. It became dominant in the 19th century, but it is believed that its beginnings go back even earlier. According to Machida (2008), GTM was used in European schools and universities in the 16th and 17th centuries. The name is often associated with German scholars who applied GTM in their classrooms, such as Seidenstrucker, Plotz, Olldendorf, and Meidinger. This method spread in North America during the 19th century, while in Europe, new methods emerged simultaneously. Regardless of the emergence of new methods, GTM continued to be applied even during the 20th century. For example, Eisa (2020, p. 386) states, “In China in the period from the 1980s to early 1990s, the GTM was viewed as the only way of foreign language teaching”. Although initially used for teaching classical languages, over time, the scope of the GTM expanded and became one of the most used methods for language teaching, especially ESL/EFL. This is why Richards and Rodgers (2014) compare English to Latin as the most learned foreign or second language nowadays.

The primary aim of the GTM is to enable students to gain knowledge in reading and writing, along with developing grammar and vocabulary in the target language. The GTM requires memorization of vocabulary and the translation of literary texts, enabling students to engage with foreign language literature. The GTM was perceived as a beneficial mental exercise that facilitated the learning of grammar rules and their application through

translation exercises, which was the central focus of this method. It was achieved by stressing the reading and writing skills, while listening and speaking, as well as the fluency in the target language were neglected. The GTM prioritizes accuracy, achieved through memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary. This feature positions the method as a deductive approach to language learning. Prioritizing accuracy does not leave a place for students' errors that are corrected immediately. "If learners answer a question incorrectly, the teacher would select somebody else to give the correct answer and/or he/she replies directly" (Benati, 2018, p. 2). Karakas (2019) claims that students are passive in class, following instructions, while the teacher is the authority figure who provides instructions and applies different techniques. Techniques of the GTM are based on memorizing. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2014), Elmayantie (2015), and Piantaggini (2020), some standard techniques include translation of literary texts from the target language to L1 and vice versa, rote memorization of long lists of target language words as well as their native language equivalents, fill-in-the-blanks, reading comprehension questions, repetition drills, grammar drills in written form, reading of literary texts, often to understand the content and translate them into the L1. The GTM is classified as a deductive approach to learning due to the techniques applied, which is often characterized as a limitation of this method.

The GTM has been criticized since its emergence because of its limitations. Due to its focus on the translation of written texts and memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary, lack of real-life context in which language is used, this approach to language learning tends to result in limited language and grammar skills (Rizvić-Eminović et al., 2018; Rizvić-Eminović et al., 2017). Repetitive and drill-focused techniques applied in GTM can lead to students' disengagement and demotivation (Bujak et al., 2020). "Motivation is a crucial part in language learning in which it has relation to the student's achievements toward the learning goals" (Faradila et al., 2022, p. 10). Because of its focus on dead languages, GTM's effectiveness became limited in English language teaching. However, despite its limitations and criticisms, the GTM holds an important place in the history of language education and is still being used in some parts of the world.

## **The Direct Method**

The Direct Method, also known as the Natural Method, appeared as a response to all the flaws of the Grammar-Translation Method. It gained popularity in 1878 when Maximilian Berlitz opened a school in the United States. “Berlitz was the first to mass-market the Direct Method, but he was by no means the first to argue that second language learning should be taught ‘directly’, i.e., unmediated by the translation” (Thornbury, 2017, p. 23). Significant contribution to the Direct was made by language reformers Gouin and Berlitz. Gouin’s work inspired other language reformers of that time, including Bertha Karl, Henry Sweet, and Wilhelm Viëtor, who also advocated for the Direct Method and incorporated it into English lessons with the same objectives as today’s teachers.

From its emergence until the present, the goal of this method has remained the same - to develop oral proficiency and the ability to think in the target language. To achieve this goal, the Direct Method demands using the target language while minimizing using the learner’s native language. The Direct Method focuses on authentic speaker’s communication without relying on the native language, “which is the opposite of the Grammar Translation Method” (Djauhar, 2021, p. 85). To attain the objectives of the Direct Method, teachers must diligently implement and adhere to its established rules and principles. Native language should be used at a minimum or not used at all because the goal is to enable learners to communicate directly in the target language. It aims to create a natural language learning experience similar to how children acquire their native language. Based on this, it is evident that the focus is on listening and speaking skills. Reading and writing are not neglected but are not in focus. Students can correct themselves if they make mistakes and are given enough time. Grammar is taught in context, inductively. Krause (1912) states that learners engage in meaningful language use, allowing them to develop their understanding of linguistic laws and rules through firsthand experience. Krause (1912) also adds that this creative and enjoyable process encourages observation and independent thinking, fostering a sense of autonomy in language learning. A high level of student participation characterizes the interaction

between students and the teacher compared to GTM's teacher-centeredness. The teacher's role is to expose students to the target language.

Learning and communication are followed by visual aids, gestures, pictures, pantomime, and real-life objects to convey meaning. These aids serve as teachers' primary tools when it comes to the association of ideas with no translation or any help from the native language. Besides oral communication, various techniques are used within this method, such as interactive question-answer exercises, listening activities, and oral activities such as reading aloud. Teachers often use situational role-plays, which enhance fluency and confidence during and after communication while including the learning of vocabulary and grammar in context.

Improving comprehension and pronunciation and focusing on listening and speaking skills set the conditions for smaller classes to perform all the techniques of this method, unlike GTM, whose techniques can be implemented in larger classes. To achieve the lesson's aims and to implement the techniques listed above, a teacher who is a native speaker is required. The complexity of performing and applying techniques is time-consuming, so students and lessons depend highly on the teacher. While it simultaneously improves some aspects of the student's language, others are neglected, such as complex grammar structures. This is seen as a shortcoming of this method, overshadowed by the appearance of new methods that seemed more practical at the time.

### **Audiolingual Method**

Due to the impact of the Second World War, the development of language learning methods went in a different direction. In 1942, the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) introduced the Audiolingual Method, also known as the Army method. The Audiolingual Method's focus on oral-based communication skills makes it suitable for training soldiers to develop language proficiency for practical military purposes. This method relies on behaviorist theory, which focuses on how external factors, such as things we see or experience, can influence and shape our behavior and how we learn. In Audiolingual Method, language learning relies on repetitive drills and memorization, emphasizing correct

responses and providing positive feedback. Supporters of this method believe in habit formation, which means teaching students to communicate in the target language by developing habits. The more something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the more successful the learning.

In order to successfully apply this method, students must use listening and speaking skills that are in focus. Little or no attention is paid to reading and writing. With a strong focus on productive language skills, correct pronunciation is practiced along the way. The native language is not used in the classroom, and translation is avoided, as in the Direct Method. The Audiolingual Method can be seen as a combination of the Direct Method and the GTM. It has some elements of the GTM, such as drilling exercises, and the already mentioned elements of the Direct Method, such as avoiding translation and the use of the native language.

Similarly, in the Audiolingual Method, grammar instruction takes an inductive approach, which means that learners are first exposed to language patterns in context before explaining the rules. In the Audiolingual Method, students learn grammar rules by doing activities involving listening and repeatedly practicing language patterns. Through this, they gradually understand and remember grammar rules without explicitly being taught them. Through such activities, students develop an intuitive understanding of grammar without explanations. Regarding error-correcting, it is similar to GTMs; it is immediate and frequent. In the Audiolingual Method, the teacher's role is to produce the spoken language. At the same time, students, on the other hand, primarily act as imitators, observing and imitating the language demonstrated by the teacher.

Teachers fulfill that role through different techniques. These techniques include dialogs, where students listen and repeat after the teacher to acquire proper pronunciation and intonation. Pattern drills provide students with repetitive practice of specific grammatical structures. Memorization is encouraged, involving dialog, vocabulary, and grammatical patterns. Backward build-up exercises help students gradually develop their speaking skills by practicing longer and more complex sentences. The chain drill involves a sequential question-and-response format among students. Transformation drills allow students to practice altering sentence structures, such as turning statements into questions.

Dictation exercises improve listening and writing skills as students transcribe spoken language. Various techniques are used, such as repetition, replacement, completion, transposition, expansion, transformation, and integration.

While the Audiolingual Method has its strengths, it also shows certain limitations. One of these drawbacks is the overemphasis on oral skills. The method's focus on spoken language neglects the development of other language skills. Moreover, due to its heavy reliance on drills and repetition, the learning process can become monotonous and unengaging for students. Another shortcoming is the method's limited attention to meaning and context, which may interrupt students' comprehension and application of language in authentic situations. The Audiolingual Method struggles to connect language learning to real-life scenarios beyond the classroom, limiting students' ability to apply their skills in practical contexts. To solve these problems, it is crucial to recognize the limitations as language reformers attempt new language teaching and learning methods.

### **Communicative Language Teaching**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or Communicative Approach (CA) emerged in the 1970s as a response to the limitations of the previous methods. Bax (2003) points out that CLT's popularity is its problem-solving approach to learning. Research in linguistics, which denied drilling exercises and turned to communication, had a significant influence on the spread of this method. According to Fathurrochman (2019), part of the credit goes to Noam Chomsky and his research in linguistics and his ideology of CLT in the 1960s. In CLT, Chomsky's ideas contributed to the belief that language learning should focus on meaningful communication and the ability to use language in real-life situations.

CLT contrasts with traditional methods emphasizing grammar rules, translation, drilling exercises, or only focusing on one language skill. CLT's aim is the learners' ability to use the target language fluently and accurately, emphasizing understanding and expressing meaning rather than solely focusing on formal grammar rules. In contrast to previously discussed methods, CLT is



learner-centered. At the same time, the teacher acts as a facilitator leading the lesson to engage students in interactions with each other. The teacher does it through classroom activities that simulate real-life communication situations by applying various techniques such as role-playing, task-based activities, and pair and group work that encourage student interaction. Errors are considered a natural part of the process and are corrected, acknowledging their natural occurrence.

However, CLT has some limitations, like any other method. Implementing CLT in large classes can be challenging due to each student's need for individualized attention. Striking a balance between encouraging communication, providing accuracy, and grammatical correctness can be complex for teachers. CLT requires both teachers and students to have a high level of language proficiency to successfully implement the mentioned techniques and achieve the aims of this method. Despite these limitations, many educators continue to adapt CLT in their classrooms.

### **Task-Based Language Teaching**

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) can be seen as a result of the limitations of traditional language teaching methods. The origins of TBLT can be traced back to the work of researchers and educators who tried to create a more learner-centered and meaning-focused approach to language teaching influenced by CLT. The concept of making tasks the central focus of instruction gained popularity in the 1980s with the work of practitioners such as Prabhu, Willis, and Nunan. Prabhu's pioneering work in the 1980s emphasized the importance of meaningful tasks that engaged learners in authentic language use. He advocated integrating language and content through task-based activities simulating real-world communication. Michael Long played a significant role in promoting TBLT as a practical approach to language teaching. His research highlighted the significance of tasks in facilitating language learning and the importance of learners participating in meaningful communication.

According to Yildiz and Senel (2017), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach that emphasizes using tasks for grammar teaching and encourages learners to engage in meaningful

communication. “TBLT is based on communication like in CLT” (Yildiz and Senel, 2017, p. 198). TBLT aims to develop students’ communicative competence by engaging them in tasks. The tasks are designed to be meaningful, challenging, authentic, and enjoyable to learners. Language is seen as a tool for communication rather than a target of study, indicating that language is learned through doing rather than through explicit instruction. TBLT posits that language is learned when used in context, and the focus is on meaning rather than form. TBLT is learner-centered; the teacher’s role is to guide and support learners even if they make mistakes. Learners are taught that errors are part of the process.

Another part of that process is techniques implemented, such as task design, where teachers create tasks that require learners to use language to achieve a specific goal. Tasks are divided into stages. Pre-task activities help mentally and linguistically prepare learners by introducing the topic, activating relevant vocabulary, and discussing the task’s goals. As its name implies, giving instructions is the stage of preparing students for the upcoming task. In during-task performance, learners use the language to complete the task, often collaborating in pairs or groups. In the post-task stage, teachers provide feedback and analysis to reflect on their performance and analyze language usage.

TBLT presents specific challenges for both teachers and students. Implementing TBLT can be time-consuming for teachers, as tasks require extensive preparation (Bureković, 2012; Rizvić-Eminović et al., 2021). Some learners may find it challenging to adapt to the level of autonomy required in TBLT, as they are expected to take an active role in their learning (Rizvić-Eminović et al., 2022). Despite the challenges, TBLT offers a learner-centered approach that promotes meaningful communication and engagement in language learning tasks on a much higher level than previously mentioned methods.

## **Conclusion**

The review of the five language teaching methods provides insights into their characteristics. Each method presents a unique approach to language learning, with different emphases on

grammar, translation, and communication. Based on the features of each of the above presented language teaching methods, a comparative table is provided in Figure 2 for a better understanding of their differences.

Method →		Gramm ar- translati on	Dire ct	Audioling ual	Communica tive language teaching	Task- based langua ge teachi ng
Key features ↓						
Languag e learning	inductive		√	√	√	√
	deductive	√			√	
Aims	translation	√				
	accuracy	√				
	reading	√				
	oral proficiency		√	√		
	natural language		√			
	fluency			√	√	√
	communica tive competence				√	√
Techniq ues	translation exercises	√				
	grammar drills	√				
	immersion		√			
	demonstrati on		√			
	conversatio n		√			
	repetitive drills			√		
	pattern practice			√		
	role-plays				√	
	task-based activities				√	
	discussions				√	
	task design					√
	language focus					√
	feedback					√
	authority	√				

<b>Teacher's role</b>	figure					
	explanation	√				
	facilitator		√		√	√
	moderator		√			
	drill conductor			√		
	task designer					√
<b>Student's role: → ↓ active participants in</b>	imitators			√		
	passive recipients	√				
	dialogue		√			
	in drill			√		
	in interactions in tasks				√	√
<b>Limitations</b>	limited focus on oral communication	√				
	lack of meaningful communication	√				
	demotivating	√				
	limited focus on reading and writing skills		√	√		
	neglected complex grammar structures		√			
	limited attention to meaning and context			√		
	time-consuming				√	√
	requires fluent students				√	
challenges in assessment and					√	

	curriculum alignment					
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Figure 2. *Comparative table of EL teaching methods*

The Grammar Translation Method, with the most extended historical foundations, emphasizes the deductive teaching of grammar and translation from the native to the target language and vice versa. While it can enhance understanding of grammatical structures, it may limit the use of speaking and listening language skills, as well as context and meaningful communication. Conversely, the Direct Method presents an immersive learning experience by using the target language in the classroom minimizing and even abandoning the native language. It encourages teacher-student interactions, prioritizing listening and speaking skills. The Audiolingual Method is another name for oral communication and repetition. It focuses on patterns and structures through drills and dialogs. Like GTM, it enhances and neglects some language skills. To be more precise, Audiolingual Method neglects reading and writing. Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching revolutionized language teaching by prioritizing communication and student exposure to authentic language use. CLT and TBLT set higher requirements for teachers, as well as for students. CLT and TBLT share many similarities but also exhibit differences. In CLT, the primary goal is communication, while in contrast, TBLT utilizes dialogue as a means to accomplish objectives within tasks.

Considering everything presented above, no unique method can be applied to language, especially teaching. The choice hinges on numerous factors such as lesson goals, teacher preferences and experience, students' level of fluency. The most influential one is the teacher's preference in the sense of their experience. "In other words, the teacher's teaching experience shapes the teacher's belief in deciding the teaching method which leads to the actions or implementation in the classroom to achieve the desired learning objectives" (Faradila et al., 2022, p. 3). Faradila et al. (2022) state that short-experienced teachers tend to use textbook-based tasks such as gap-filling exercises, writing personal stories, translating dialogues, and memorizing vocabulary, while long-experienced

teachers emphasize incorporating real-world activities into their teaching methods.

All of the above methods are still subject to research, analysis, and comparison. Spahiu and Kryeziu (2021) conducted research and revealed significant GTM and Direct Method effects. The research conducted by Bagheri et al. (2019) revealed that Audiolingual Method was less effective in enhancing speaking skills, whereas CLT demonstrated significantly greater success in this regard. Shaoqian and Baoshu's (2013) research on TBLT shows that teachers and students strongly favor this method. What can be inferred from this review is that the newer teaching methods yield superior results according to research and enjoy greater acceptance among both teachers and students, in contrast to older methodologies like the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), which tend to be less effective. Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognize there is not a one-size-fits-all approach that can comprehensively address all aspects of language acquisition, including language skills, vocabulary, and grammar. Teaching is a multifaceted endeavor, demanding adaptability to numerous factors within the classroom environment.

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## **PREGLED PET METODA PODUČAVANJA ENGLESKOG JEZIKA**

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### ***Sažetak***

U radu se daje pregled pet metoda podučavanja engleskog jezika: gramatičko-prevodilačke metode, direktne metode, audiolingvalne metode, komunikativnog podučavanja jezika, te metode bazirane na izvršavanju zadataka. Za svaku metodu se daje kratki historijski pregled, a zatim ciljevi, principi, tehnike podučavanja, ali i ograničenja. Kontinuirano propitivanje metoda podučavanja engleskog jezika je neophodno, jer one nastavnicima osiguravaju strukturirani okvir podučavanja i prenošenja znanja. Izbor metode podučavanja je ključan za uspješno podučavanje, ali i učenje. Pored toga, različitim studentima odgovaraju različiti pristupi učenju. Danas postoji nekolicina metoda podučavanja, međutim, u ovom radu se daje kratak pregled onih najznačajnijih, koje su obilježile historijski razvoj od samih početaka metoda podučavanja i učenja engleskog jezika. Istražujući osobine svake od navedenih metoda, ovim radom se nastoji unaprijediti razumijevanje njihovih međusobnih razlika i dati kritički osvrt na svaku od njih kako bi se mlađi nastavnici engleskog jezika dodatno uputili i potpomogli u samoevaluaciji vlastite prakse podučavanja.

**Ključne riječi:** podučavanje engleskog jezika, metode podučavanja, učenje engleskog jezika

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## النظرة على خمس طرق لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية

### الملخص

يقدم هذا البحث نظرة عامة على خمس طرق لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية: طريقة القواعد والترجمة، والطريقة المباشرة، والطريقة السمعية واللغوية، والطريقة التواصلية، والطريقة المبنية على إجراء المهام. يتم تقديم لمحة تاريخية موجزة عن كل طريقة، تليها الأهداف والمبادئ وتقنيات التدريس والقيود والعوائق. إن التساؤل المستمر حول طرق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية يعدّ أمرًا ضروريًا، لأنها توفر للمعلمين إطارًا منظمًا للتدريس ونقل المعرفة. إنّ اختيار طريقة التدريس أمر بالغ الأهمية لنجاح التدريس والتعلم. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن الأساليب المختلفة للتعلم تناسب الطلاب المختلفين. يوجد اليوم العديد من طرق التدريس، لكن هذه المقالة تقدم لمحة موجزة عن أهمها، والتي ميزت التطور التاريخي منذ بداية طرق تدريس وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. ومن خلال التحقيق في خصائص كل من الطرق المذكورة، يسعى هذا العمل إلى تعزيز فهم الاختلافات المتبادلة وتقديم مراجعة نقدية لكل منها من أجل مواصلة توجيه معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الشباب ومساعدتهم في التقييم الذاتي لقدراتهم وممارستهم للتدريس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، طرق التدريس، تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية