



Methods of Teaching English in Secondary Schools: A Scientific Exploration of Approaches

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ABSTRACT: This scientific article examines various methods employed in teaching English in secondary schools, considering their theoretical foundations, effectiveness, and challenges. With English becoming a global lingua franca, it is crucial to adopt diverse pedagogical strategies to accommodate the needs of learners. By investigating established teaching methods—such as the Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Audiolingual Method—this study aims to provide insights into the best practices for fostering English language acquisition in secondary education. The paper analyzes each method, reviews empirical research, and proposes recommendations for teachers.

Key words: Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, Audiolingual Method, Secondary Education, Pedagogy, Language Acquisition, Language Teaching Methods.

Introduction. English language teaching (ELT) in secondary schools plays a crucial role in enhancing students' proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. As the importance of English increases globally, educators must consider effective methods for teaching it in diverse classrooms. Research into language acquisition and pedagogical theories has led to the development of multiple teaching strategies, each designed to address the needs and abilities of different learners. This article provides a scientific analysis of key



teaching methods used in secondary school classrooms, with a focus on their theoretical frameworks, application, and efficacy.

1. The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM)

The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) originated in the 19th century and was traditionally used for teaching classical languages, including Latin and Greek. Its core belief is that explicit instruction in grammar and vocabulary, coupled with translation exercises, provides learners with a strong foundation in language structure. According to behaviorist theories, repetition and rote memorization of grammar rules help students internalize language patterns.

In GTM, students are taught grammatical rules and vocabulary, often in isolation. Instruction is typically delivered in the students' native language, and learners translate passages from English to their native language and vice versa. The emphasis is on reading and writing skills rather than speaking and listening. There is little to no emphasis on real-life communication.

While GTM fosters an understanding of grammar and syntax, it is often criticized for its lack of focus on communicative competence and oral proficiency. Research indicates that students trained solely in GTM may struggle to use the language in real-life contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, it can be effective in building the foundation for academic English, particularly for students focusing on reading and writing.

2. The Direct Method

The Direct Method, also known as the Natural Method, emerged as a response to the Grammar-Translation Method. This approach is grounded in the theory of language immersion and emphasizes natural language acquisition, much like how children learn their first language. The method proposes that second language learners should be immersed in the target language from the start, with no recourse to their native language. The Direct Method focuses on developing speaking and listening skills. Teachers present



vocabulary and grammar through context and demonstration rather than translation. Students are encouraged to communicate in English as much as possible. Lessons often include activities such as role-plays, dialogues, and storytelling, where learners practice language in real-world situations.

Research by Cook (2001) suggests that the Direct Method enhances fluency and speaking proficiency by providing constant exposure to the language. However, the method can be challenging for beginners due to the absence of the native language as a scaffold for understanding. Additionally, it may neglect grammar in favor of fluency, which can lead to errors in language use if not supplemented with additional instruction.

3. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the 1970s, influenced by theories of communicative competence developed by linguists such as Hymes (1972) and Canale and Swain (1980). CLT prioritizes the ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations, rather than simply mastering grammatical structures. It is rooted in the belief that language learners should acquire not only linguistic competence but also the social and contextual skills necessary for communication.

In CLT, the focus is on interactive and task-based learning. Teachers facilitate communication through pair work, group discussions, debates, and problem-solving activities. Authentic materials—such as news articles, videos, and advertisements—are used to expose students to natural language use. Error correction is typically done in a way that does not impede communication, thus fostering a more relaxed and open classroom environment.

Empirical studies support the effectiveness of CLT in developing communicative competence, especially in preparing students for real-life interactions (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, CLT may face challenges in classrooms with large groups or when students have limited proficiency. Moreover, it is important to balance fluency and



accuracy, as too much focus on communication may result in grammatical inaccuracies that could impede language development.

4. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is based on the premise that language learning is most effective when learners are engaged in meaningful tasks that reflect real-world use of language. This approach is influenced by cognitive theories of learning, which emphasize the role of active participation and problem-solving in the learning process. The central tenet of TBLT is that tasks provide learners with opportunities to use language in context, promoting both language production and comprehension.

TBLT focuses on designing tasks that are relevant to students' interests and needs. Tasks can include projects, presentations, problem-solving exercises, and collaborative activities that require students to use language purposefully. These tasks are often divided into pre-task, task, and post-task stages, with each phase providing opportunities for practice, feedback, and reflection.

TBLT has been shown to improve fluency and engagement, especially when tasks are designed to mirror real-life scenarios (Willis, 1996). However, the method requires careful planning and scaffolding to ensure that tasks are appropriately challenging for learners. Additionally, TBLT may not be effective for teaching specific grammar rules or vocabulary in isolation, which some learners may need for academic English.

5. The Audiolingual Method (ALM)

The Audiolingual Method (ALM) is based on behaviorist psychology, which emphasizes learning through reinforcement and repetition. It prioritizes the development of speaking and listening skills through drills and pattern practice. ALM assumes that language acquisition is a process of habit formation, where correct language usage is reinforced through repetition.



In the ALM classroom, students engage in repetitive drills that focus on pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical structures. The teacher models a sentence, and students repeat it in unison. Over time, students are expected to produce the correct language forms automatically. The focus is primarily on oral skills, with limited attention given to reading and writing.

ALM has been criticized for its over-reliance on repetition and its limited focus on communication in meaningful contexts. Research by Prabhu (1987) suggests that while ALM can improve pronunciation and sentence formation, it fails to adequately prepare learners for real-world language use. Additionally, the method may lead to boredom and disengagement in students due to its repetitive nature.

Conclusion. The methods discussed in this article represent distinct pedagogical approaches to teaching English in secondary schools. While each method has its strengths and limitations, research indicates that the most effective teaching strategies are those that incorporate a combination of techniques, depending on the learners' needs and the specific context. Methods such as Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching emphasize interactive, real-world language use, while more traditional methods like Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual focus on foundational grammar and pronunciation skills. A balanced, flexible approach that integrates elements from multiple methods is likely to provide students with a well-rounded language education, preparing them for both academic and practical communication in English.



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