

## DEFINITIONS OF METHOD

The dictionary defines "A method is a way of doing things". Teaching methods deal with how to teach.

According to Anthony "Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which is based upon the selected approach."

According to M.Verma, "Matter is important for determining method. The common teaching matter may be of three types; hence all the methods can be classified under three categories as shown in Figure 12.2.

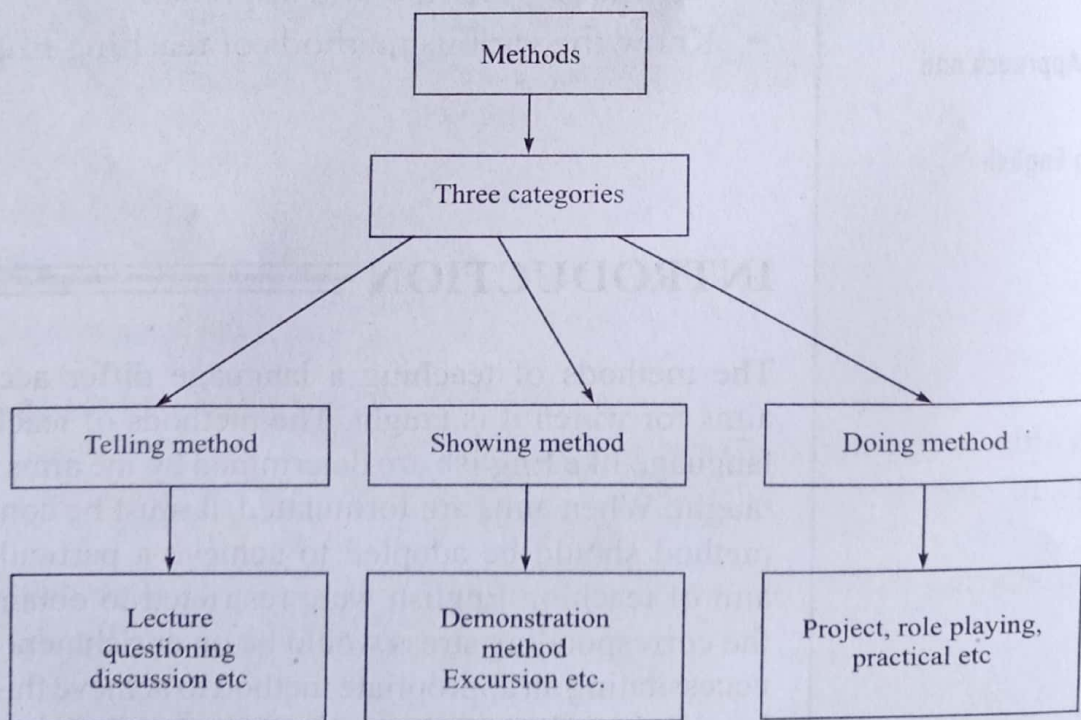


Fig. 12.2 Categories of teaching

## **METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH**

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The following are the major methods of teaching English as a second language.

- Grammar-Translation method
- Direct method
- Bilingual method

## Translation Method

Translation Method is a method of teaching a foreign language through translation. This is the oldest method of teaching a foreign language. It originated in Germany towards the end of eighteenth century. This method is also called Grammar Translation Method.

In this method, teacher reads the prescribed text and translates word by word into pupils' mother tongue. Teacher asks some questions to test the comprehension of pupils. Rules of grammar are presented deductively. Pupils are required to learn these rules by heart. Reading and writing are given prominence. Pupils' mother tongue is the medium of instruction. Accuracy is emphasised. Skills of listening and speaking are not given due importance. No attention is given to the pronunciation.

### Advantages

- ✓ It is easy to be followed.
- ✓ It saves time.
- ✓ It helps in developing pupils' vocabulary.
- ✓ It is inexpensive as it requires a few aids.
- ✓ It develops the art of translation in pupils.
- ✓ It is easy to test pupils' comprehension.
- ✓ It is easy to explain abstract words.
- ✓ It facilitates proceeding from known to unknown.
- ✓ It makes use of pupils' knowledge of mother tongue.

### Limitations

- ✓ It ignores the natural way of learning a language.
- ✓ It impedes free expression.
- ✓ It disregards speech.

It encourages literal translation which is not always possible.  
It is not applicable in multi linguistic groups.  
It doesn't provide any pattern practice.  
It ignores pronunciation, stress and intonation.

## ***Principles of Translation Method***

The main principles on which the Grammar-cum-Translation Method is based are the following:

*Clarity and firmness:* Translation interprets the words and phrases of the foreign languages in the best possible manner.

*Domination of vernacular:* The vernacular dominates in this method.

*Parallel study of two languages:* The structures of the foreign languages are best learnt when compared with those of **vernacular**.

*Maxim of known to unknown:* The fundamental principles of proceedings from known to unknown are followed.

*Word as a unit of teaching:* The unit of teaching is word not a sentence.

## ***Content and Characteristics***

1. Classes are taught in vernacular, with little active use of the target language
2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words
3. Long, elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given
4. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words
5. Reading of difficult classical text is begun early
6. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis
7. Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue
8. Little or no attention is given to pronunciation

***Typical Techniques*** Techniques closely related with the grammar translation method are summarized below.

1. *Translation of a literary passage* Translating target language to native language
2. *Reading comprehension questions* Finding information in a passage, making inferences and relating to personal experience
3. *Antonyms/synonyms* Finding antonyms and synonyms for words or sets of words
4. *Cognates* Learning spelling/sound patterns that correspond between L1 and the target language
5. *Deductive application of rule* Understanding grammar rules and their exceptions, then applying them to new example
6. *Fill-in-the-blanks* Filling in gaps in sentences with new words or items of a particular grammar type
7. *Memorization* Memorizing vocabulary lists, grammatical rules and grammatical paradigms
8. *Use words in sentences* Students create sentences to illustrate they know the meaning and use of new words
9. *Composition* Students write about a topic using the target language

# Direct Method

Direct Method originated in France in 1901 as a direct consequence of the demerits of the translation method.

Direct Method is a method of teaching English directly. In the words of Webster's International Dictionary, "Direct Method is a method of teaching a foreign language, especially a modern language through conversation, discussion and reading in the language itself, without the use of the pupils' language, without translation and without the study of the formal grammar. The first words are taught by pointing to objects or pictures or by performing actions."

It follows that second language learning must be an imitation of first language learning. Speech is primary. Knowing a language means knowing to use it.

## Aims

- To enable the pupils think in the target language.
- To develop pupils' listening comprehension in the target language.
- To enable pupils to express thoughts orally in the target language.
- To develop an unerring language sense in pupils.
- To develop pupils' reading comprehension in the target language
- To enable pupils to express thoughts in writing in English

## Characteristics

- Focus on natural way of learning.
- Total inhibition of mother tongue.
- Direct teaching of a language in that language itself.
- Emphasis on listening and speaking.
- Creation of English atmosphere in the class room.
- Direct bond between English word and idea.
- Inductive teaching of grammar.

Stress on habit formation.  
Sentence as the unit of teaching.  
Emphasis on native like pronunciation.  
Activity orientation.  
Use of audio visual aids.

### **Advantages**

It develops aural-oral skills. ✓  
It improves fluency of speech. ✓  
It enables pupils to think in English. ✓  
It facilitates easy understanding of English. ✓  
It develops active vocabulary. ✓  
It develops a taste for English literature. ✓  
It causes immediate correction of mistakes. ✓

### **Limitations**

It consumes a lot of time.  
It is expensive as it requires the use of Audio Visual Aids.  
Grammar is not systematically taught.  
It doesn't give due consideration for reading and writing.  
It requires brilliant pupils.  
It requires extra competent teachers.



## **Objectives**

The sole and the most important objective of the direct method is to, *communicate* in the target language, partly by learning how to *think* in that language and by not involving L1 in the language learning process.

## **Principles of the Direct Method**

The direct method is based on certain principles which are explained below.

- 1. Inhibition of the vernacular:** Classroom instruction should be conducted exclusively in the target language.
- 2. Limited vocabulary:** Only everyday vocabulary and sentences should be taught.
  - Concrete vocabulary should be taught through demonstration, objects, pictures
  - Abstract vocabulary should be taught through association of ideas
- 3. Enhancing Communication Skills:** Oral communication skills should be built up in a carefully planned manner
- 4. Descriptive Teaching Grammar:** Grammar should be taught inductively
- 5. Practice:** New teaching points should be taught through modeling and practice
- 6. Emphasis is laid on pronunciation:** Correct pronunciation and grammar should be emphasized.

### **Example**

The teacher explains new vocabulary using realia, visual aids or demonstrations.

## **Steps Involved in Typical Techniques**

Typical techniques of teaching involve the following:

- 1. Reading Aloud:**—Reading aloud sections of passages, plays or dialogues.
- 2. Question and Answer Exercise:**—Asking questions in the target language and having students answer in full sentence

3. Student Self-Correction:—Teacher facilitates opportunities for students to self correct using follow-up questions, tone
4. Conversation Practice:—Teacher asks students and students ask students questions using the target language
5. Fill-in-the-blank Exercise:—Items use target language only
6. Dictation:—Teacher reads the passage aloud
7. Paragraph Writing:—Students write paragraphs in their own words using the target language and various models

## **Bilingual Method**

Bilingual Method is a method of teaching a second language that incorporates the salient features of the direct method and translation method. This method was proposed by Dr. C. J. Dodson.

Bilingual Method is a midway between the translation method that excessively uses and the direct method that totally banishes the mother tongue of the pupils. In bilingual method, only restricted use of mother tongue is allowed. Teacher can use it where it is helpful in removing confusion and saving time. However, it is used mainly in the initial stages. Learners are required to use the target language only. A lot of pattern practice is given. Translation is seen as an additional safeguard against misunderstanding.

## **Characteristics**

- No focus on creating situations.
- Sentence is the unit of teaching.
- Intensive practice in sentence patterns.
- Restricted use of mother tongue.
- Emphasis on pronunciation.
- Consideration for all skills.

## **Aims**

- To facilitate the students' learning of the target language by making necessary use of their knowledge of mother tongue.
- To minimise transmission of knowledge between the teacher and students.
- To help learners form accurate concepts.
- To avoid confusion in comprehending the word meanings.

## **Merits**

- ✓ It saves time.
- ✓ It reduces teachers' work load of creating situations.
- ✓ It ensures accuracy.
- It is economical as audio visual aids are not essential.
- It makes use of pupils' knowledge of mother tongue.
- It can be followed by average teachers.

## **Limitations**

- It cannot be applied in multi linguistic group.
- It requires teachers well versed in both languages.
- Frequent comparison and contrast with mother tongue may cause confusion.
- It poses challenge to the English atmosphere of the class.
- Teacher's use of mother tongue may cause the students' use of the same.
- It reduces students' exposure to the target language.
- It reduces teacher - pupil interaction in the target language.
- It ignores the fundamental aims of English language teaching.

## ***Objectives of the Bilingual Method***

The major objectives of the Bilingual Method are:

1. To make the learners of a second/foreign language fluent and accurate in the spoken word.
2. To make the learners accurate in the written word.
3. To prepare the learners in such a manner that he may be able to achieve through bilingualism.

## ***Bilingual Method Principles***

The bilingual method follows certain principles as explained below.

- *Restricted use of the vernacular* Teaching-learning process is facilitated if only the mother tongue equivalents are given to the learner without duplicating the situation. So the vernacular is used at initial stage to explain the meaning of words.
- *Saves the time of the teacher* The use of the vernacular saves the time of the teacher from creating artificial situations.
- *More pattern practice* The advocates of the Bilingual Method believe that it is a waste of time to recreate the situation while teaching a foreign language, so time saved from creating situations can be used for giving more pattern practice to the students.
- *Only teacher speaks in vernacular* It is the teacher who uses the vernacular. Students only practice patterns of English.
- *Sentence as unit of speech* The unit of speech is a sentence and not word. Emphasis is laid on speaking full sentences.

## Differences among Translation, Direct and Bilingual Methods

Point of Focus	Translation Method	Direct Method	Bilingual Method
Use of mother tongue	Unlimited	Prohibited	Restricted
Speech	Ignored	Emphasied	Emphasised
Practice in sentence patterns	Nil	Yes	Yes
Nature of teachers required	Average	Competent	Competent
Nature of students required	Average	Competent	Average
Use of Audio Visual Aids	Not needed	Essential	Not essential
Applicability	Not successful in multi linguistic group	Successful in mono and multi linguistic groups	Not so successful in multi linguistic group
Nature of teaching	Teaching by rules	Teaching by use	Teaching by use
Linguistic atmosphere of classroom	Mother tongue atmosphere	English atmosphere	A mixed atmosphere of English and mother tongue

**Table 12.3:** Differences between Translation/Direct/Bilingual/Method

<i>Translation method</i>	<i>Direct method</i>	<i>Bilingual method</i>
It is a classical method of teaching.	It came as a reaction to the translation method.	It is a modified version of both the translation method and direct method.
It makes excessive use of the mother tongue.	The use of mother tongue is prohibited.	Vernacular is used in restricted manner.
The teachers as well as students use the mother tongue in explaining the sentences, meanings etc.	Neither the teacher nor the students use the mother tongue.	In the Bilingual Method it is the teacher who always makes use of the mother tongue to explain meanings and not the students.
Students are not given any practice in the drill of sentence patterns.	It lays more emphasis on pattern practice.	The learner is sufficiently subjected to sentence pattern drills.

*Contd.*

Students have less practice in Speaking English.	Students have greater practice in speaking English.	Students have greater practice in speaking English.
It is not much improved method of teaching English.	It is an improved method of teaching English.	It is an improved method of teaching English.
This method is less costly.	This method is very costly.	This method is less costly.
It suits to both the average and below average students.	It suits only brilliant students.	It suits to both the average and below average students.
It suits to majority of teachers.	It suits to the expert language teacher.	It suits to the average teacher.

## WHICH METHOD IS THE BEST?

The objective of language learning is to enable the learners to learn the target language and for this students should be actively involved in the learning process. So a good teacher is always in search of an effective method of teaching. The goals of language teaching can be obtained by selecting an appropriate method of teaching. After discussing the various methods of teaching English in India, it can be concluded that there is perhaps no single method which is workable in Indian classrooms. Why not go in for a rainbow effect in which the best of each method be incorporated depending upon the competence of the teacher. The thing that concerns us the most is the output. Methods are good or bad with reference to the output/outcomes of the linguistic abilities. The crux of the linguistic learning is that one is able to use it fluently, correctly and effectively as a matter of habit or, as master of course without any obvious stain on the thinking process. Every teacher of English should be able to achieve this target irrespective of the method implemented while teaching. So, it is advisable that the teacher should adopt eclectic and pragmatic approach because no single approach is useful in all the situations. The teacher should consider the following factors while making a choice of his method.

- Aims and objectives of language teaching
- Efficiency of the teacher
- Age and level of learning of students
- Class size
- Availability of instructional materials.
- Location of the institution i.e., urban or rural

## Conclusion

A good teacher is the judge of the methods; the best method is one that works well in the hands of the teacher because the right method in the hands of only right teachers can help in the attainment of goals. The methods are to serve us in our teaching process hence to be our servants and not our masters as *"the methods are meant are meant for us and not we for the methods."*