



## PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This review paper examines the historical development and current landscape of English language teaching (ELT) in India, tracing its origins from British colonial trade in the 1600s to the institutionalization of English in schools and universities following Macaulay's 1835 Minute and Wood's 1854 Despatch. The paper outlines key milestones-missionary initiatives, the 1835 English Education Act, and the establishment of universities in 1857-highlighting how English evolved from a commercial lingua franca to an elite administrative tool. It then surveys major pedagogical approaches that have shaped Indian EFL classrooms. Each method is evaluated for its impact on Indian learners, with particular attention to speaking confidence, reading and writing proficiency, and equity across urban and rural contexts. The review further explores the role of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and reflective practice for trainee teachers, emphasizing how mastery of these methods, combined with ongoing professional development, enhances learner outcomes and addresses contemporary demands for global communication. The findings suggest that while traditional methods like Grammar-Translation provide strong foundations in grammar and literacy, more interactive approaches-CLT, Direct Method, and Bilingual instruction-better foster fluency and motivation, though implementation challenges persist in large, resource-constrained classrooms.*

Key Words: English Language Teaching, Methods, Learning and Communication

### **INTRODUCTION**

English language learning in India began during British colonial rule, starting with the East India Company's arrival in 1600, serving as a trade language in coastal cities like Surat and Madras (Krishnaswamy & Srirangan, 1994). Missionary efforts in the 18th century introduced basic English education in Bengal mofussil areas around 1800, and secular schools such as Hindu College in Calcutta were founded in 1817 (Srinivas Rao, 2012). Raja Rammohan Roy promoted Western education in English in the 1820s, critiquing traditional Sanskrit and Persian systems to encourage scientific knowledge (Macaulay, 1835). A major turning point was Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1835 Minute on Education, which favored Anglicism over Orientalism, asserting English's superiority for creating an elite class "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste" to act as administrative intermediaries (Macaulay, 1835). This led



to the English Education Act 1835 under Governor-General William Bentinck, making English the medium of instruction in government schools and colleges (Sharp, 1920). The Charter Act of 1813 allocated funds for education, but before 1835, debates between Orientalists favoring local languages and Anglicists were settled in favor of English (Trevelyan, 1838). By 1854, Wood's Despatch established a structured system, creating universities in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras in 1857, cementing English in higher education and administration (Wood, 1854). Missionaries established English-medium high schools, pushing Indians seeking modern jobs to learn English, and leaders like Roy saw it as a tool for progress (Nair, 1985). This anglicization deeply embedded English in India's education, mixing control with opportunity (Phillipson, 1992). After initial phases—half-caste (1715), missionary (1800), and secular (1817)—English grew from a trade tool to an elite privilege (Srinivas Rao, 2012).

### **Evolution of English Language Teaching Methods**

English as a foreign language in schools uses a range of approaches to develop communication skills and cultural awareness (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Grammar-Translation, common in early 20th-century education, emphasizes memorization of grammar and vocabulary through translation, focusing on reading and writing rather than speaking (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The Direct Method immerses learners in English, using realia and demonstrations to build natural speaking skills without relying on the native language (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Audio-Lingualism uses repetitive drills to condition language habits (Brown, 2007). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), popular since the 1980s, focuses on interactive tasks and fluency in real contexts (Savignon, 2002). Task-Based Language Teaching organizes lessons around problem-solving activities (Willis, 1996). Total Physical Response combines commands with physical movements, helping young learners reduce anxiety (Asher, 1977). Suggestopedia uses music and relaxation for subconscious learning (Lozanov, 1978). Silent Way uses color-coded aids for self-discovery, reducing teacher talk (Gattegno, 1972). Community Language Learning creates supportive groups for student-led dialogues (Curran, 1976). These pre-2017 methods, based on behavioral, cognitive, and humanistic theories, still shape EFL classrooms today, balancing structure and engagement (Nunan, 2003).

### **Pedagogical Approach and Trainee Teachers**

Understanding English pedagogical approaches is vital for teachers to facilitate language acquisition in diverse EFL classrooms. Shulman (1986) introduced pedagogical content



knowledge (PCK) as the integration of subject matter and teaching methods, allowing teachers to adapt lessons to learners' needs. In EFL contexts, mastery of approaches like CLT or TBLT promotes communicative competence over rote learning, meeting global standards (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Teachers with this knowledge adjust strategies for multicultural settings, addressing varying proficiency levels and cultural aspects (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Freeman and Johnson (1998) stress that teacher knowledge grows through reflection, impacting student outcomes. Pedagogical expertise prevents outdated methods, encouraging inquiry-based and technology-integrated teaching (Brown, 2007). In schools, it fosters higher-order thinking and real-world application, important for employability (Nunan, 2003). Borg (2006) notes that EFL teachers' implicit knowledge needs explicit training for growth. Lack of awareness leads to mismatched instruction and achievement gaps (Desimone, 2009). Collaborative learning communities enhance PCK through dialogue and reflection, boosting teaching effectiveness (Jiang, n.d.). Ultimately, pedagogical proficiency empowers teachers to foster autonomy, cultural exchange, and lifelong learning in English (Savignon, 2002).

The most commonly used methods of teaching English as a foreign language in India are:

### **Grammar cum Translation Method**

The conventional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) has long dominated English instruction in India, emphasizing grammar rules, vocabulary memorization, and translation between the native language and English (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Classes typically focus on reading classical literature and writing exercises, with minimal attention to speaking or listening (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Rooted in colonial Macaulayism, this approach treated English as a privilege for administrative elites (Macaulay, 1835). Its effects include solid reading and writing foundations but weak oral and aural skills for Indian learners (Agnihotri, 2007). Students often perform well in exams that require rote memorization but struggle in real communication (Krishnaswamy & Burde, 1998). This method encourages passivity, limiting fluency and confidence (Pattanayak, 1981). In India, it sustains inequality, as rural learners fall behind due to limited exposure (Mohanty, 2006). A positive aspect is that grammar accuracy supports formal writing (Tickoo, 2003). However, it does not meet modern demands for global interaction (NCERT, 2005). Reforms call for a move toward more interactive approaches (Menon, 2011).

### **Direct Method**



The Direct Method in teaching English emphasizes immersion in the target language without mother-tongue translation, using visuals, gestures, and inductive grammar to promote oral proficiency (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Developed as a reaction to Grammar-Translation, it prioritizes speaking, listening, and natural acquisition through classroom conversations and demonstrations (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). In India, it is widely used in primary schools for aural-oral training, with teachers using English exclusively as the medium of instruction. Positive impacts include increased speaking confidence and fluency, with students performing better in oral tasks compared to traditional methods (Chavda, 1995). Research shows direct teaching improves academic achievement in language skills by encouraging active participation (Saha, 2011). In urban Indian schools, it motivates students through engaging activities, reducing reliance on the first language (iManager, 2014). Challenges include overcrowded classrooms and untrained teachers, limiting individual attention. Rural students benefit less due to lack of resources, widening urban-rural gaps (Tickoo, 2003). Overall, it shifts focus from exams to real-world use, though a hybrid approach is often best (NCERT, 2005).

### **Bilingual Method**

The Bilingual Method of teaching English blends the target language with the mother tongue, using L1 for explanations and L2 for practice, developed by Dodson (1967) as a compromise between Direct and Grammar-Translation approaches (Dodson, 1967). In India, it fits multilingual settings by allowing regional languages such as Hindi or Tamil to scaffold English learning (Reddy, 2012). Teachers strategically switch codes, reducing confusion in diverse classrooms (Murali, 2009). Impacts on Indian students include better comprehension and reduced anxiety, as L1 helps fill vocabulary gaps quickly (Kumar & Sailaja, 2015). Surveys show it is highly preferred, increasing motivation in non-native environments (iManager, 2014). Students gain confidence in speaking, bridging home-school language gaps (NCERT, 2005). Positive effects include improved grammar understanding and cultural relevance (Tickoo, 1996). However, over-reliance on L1 may limit pure English fluency (Agnihotri, 2007). In Indian schools, it addresses low English proficiency among graduates (Murali, 2009). Overall, it promotes inclusive learning but needs balanced implementation (Pattanayak, 1981).

### **Communicative Language Teaching Method**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the 1970s, emphasizing interactive tasks, role-plays, and authentic communication to develop fluency and competence over



accuracy (Savignon, 1983). It views language as a social function, prioritizing the four skills through pair and group work (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). In India, NCERT adopted CLT in 2005 for school curricula, shifting from rote learning to learner-centered activities (NCERT, 2005). Impacts on students include increased speaking confidence and real-life applicability, which are vital for globalization (Littlewood, 1981). Engineering students in Andhra Pradesh showed improved proficiency through CLT, addressing employment needs (Prabhu, 1987). It fosters motivation in multilingual India, bridging theory-practice gaps (Tickoo, 1996). Positive outcomes include better negotiation skills and cultural awareness (Nunan, 1991). However, large class sizes and exam-focused education hinder full implementation (Krishnaswamy & Burde, 1998). Rural students benefit less due to limited resources (Agnihotri, 2007). Overall, CLT enhances communicative ability despite challenges (Pattanayak, 1990).

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

English in India evolved from a colonial trade language to a key academic and administrative tool, shaping access to opportunities and social mobility. The Grammar-Translation Method laid strong reading and writing foundations but left speaking skills weak and reinforced rural-urban gaps. The Direct Method improved oral confidence in urban primary schools, yet large classes and untrained teachers limited its reach. The Bilingual Method eased comprehension and reduced anxiety by using L1, though excessive reliance on it can hinder full English fluency. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) introduced interactive, real-life communication, boosting confidence and employability, but large class sizes and exam-driven curricula restrict its effectiveness. Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is crucial for teachers to adapt these methods to diverse learners and multilingual contexts. Reflective practice and collaborative learning communities help teachers integrate new approaches and avoid outdated rote methods. A balanced hybrid model that combines grammar foundations with communicative and bilingual strategies is most suitable for India's varied classrooms. Investment in teacher training and resources, especially in rural areas, is essential to reduce inequality. Future research should explore technology-enhanced and blended approaches to improve English proficiency across all regions.

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