

Original Article

Language Teaching Method

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Manuscript ID:
BN-2026-030316

ISSN: 3065-7865

Volume 3

Issue 3

March 2026

Pp. 70-74

Submitted: 15 Feb 2026

Revised: 25 Feb 2026

Accepted: 12 Mar 2026

Published: 31 Mar 2026

Abstract

What is a Language? It is a tool for communication. The methods involved in language teaching varies from one place to another. Researchers proposed methods which are in constant innovation and replacement dating back from traditional method theory to modern method of Multiple Intelligences theory. All the methods have its own merits and de-merits leading to innovation and replacement. Language according to scientist is linguistics which means to say innovation and discovery whereas language according to layman is to convey messages. Since the language vary from place to place, the language teaching method do vary. The main aim of the method should lie on the fulfillment of 4 techniques such as reading, listening, understanding and speaking. The degree of 4T's vary depending on the surrounding and genetics. It is well explained in the modern method Multiple Intelligences Theory of Gardner.

Keyword: Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio - Lingual Method Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Total Physical Response (TPR), Silent Way Suggestopedia

Introduction

What is a Language? It is a tool for communication. It is the primary means by which humans convey the messages by spoken, signed and in written forms. The primary purpose of language is to facilitate communication, in the sense of transmission of information from one person to another. A language is a system of communication which consists of a set of sounds and written symbols which are used by the people of a particular country or region for communication by means of speech and writing. Every physiologically and mentally typical person acquires in childhood the ability to make use of a system of communication that comprises a circumscribed set of symbols (e.g., sounds, gestures, or written or typed characters). Many definitions have been proposed by different scholars. To mention a few, Henry Sweet, Noam Chomsky, Ferdinand de Saussure, Pannini.

In his lectures at the University of Geneva, Saussure described language as "a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas". Saussure declared that language is structured. It is a system of signs and concept of languages. Language is a formal system of signs governed by grammatical rules of combination to communicate meaning. This definition stresses that human languages can be described as closed structural systems consisting of rules that relate particular signs to particular meanings. The structuralist view of language was first introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure and his structuralism remains foundational for many approaches to language (Campbell, 2001).

Panini was a Sanskrit grammarian, logician, philologist, and revered scholar of Ancient India during the mid-1st millennium BCE, dated variously by most scholars between the 6th–5th and 4th centuries BCE (Staal, 1972). The historical facts of his life are unknown. The formal study of language is often considered to have started in India with Paṇini, the 5th century BC grammarian who formulated 3,959 rules of Sanskrit morphology. Panini's major work is Astadhyayi (or Astaka). In this work Panini distinguishes between the language of sacred texts and the usual language of communication. Panini gives formal production rules and definitions to describe Sanskrit grammar. Starting with about 1700 basic elements like nouns, verbs, vowels, consonants he put them into classes.

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How to cite this article:

C. Saranya. (2026). Language Teaching Method. Bulletin of Nexus, 3(3), 70-74.



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Website: <https://bnir.us>



The construction of sentences, compound nouns etc. is explained as ordered rules operating on underlying structures in a manner similar to modern theory (Bohtlingk, 1998). His approach to grammar influenced such foundational linguists as Ferdinand de Saussure and Leonard Bloomfield.

Noam Chomsky is an American linguist. A language is, according to Chomsky, is an innate and universal human property, a species-wide trait that develops as one matures in much the same manner as the organs of the body. It is a state obtained by a specific mental computational system that develops naturally and whose exact parameters are set by the linguistic environment that the individual is exposed to as a child (Chomsky, 1986)

Henry Sweet, an English phonetician and language scholar, stated: "Language is the expression of ideas by means of speech-sounds combined into words. Words are combined into sentences, this combination answering to that of ideas into thoughts." He emphasized that this structural combination mirrors the transformation of ideas into thoughts, focusing on the verbal, communicative, and structured nature of language (Sweet, 1900)

Language is a structured system of communication that consists of grammar and vocabulary. It is the primary means by which humans convey meaning, both in spoken and signed forms, and may also be conveyed through writing. Human language is characterized by its cultural and historical diversity, with significant variations observed between cultures and across time (Evans & Levinson, 2009). Human languages possess the properties of productivity and displacement, which enable the creation of an infinite number of sentences, and the ability to refer to objects, events, and ideas that are not immediately present in the discourse. The use of human language relies on social convention and is acquired through learning. Since the human language is dependent on the historical and cultural diversity apart from grammar and vocabulary it is vital to know the basic system of language teaching across the globe.

An overview of Teaching of languages across the globe: Practices in language education vary significantly by region (). Also, teaching methods tend to differ by region.

In United States, children learn American English as part of their institutional education. As the global world economy makes knowledge of a world language a valuable work skill, a growing number of schools now offer modern language courses, usually on an optional basis. Spanish is the most popular language to be learned, in US whereas the most popular languages to be learned in Australia

are German, French, Italian and Mandarin Chinese. Language immersion is popular in some European countries, and not used very much in the United States.

In Asia, most children learn an official version of their native language or learn a local major lingua franca (for example Mandarin, Hindustani) in Asia-Pacific countries, and all subjects are taught in that lingua franca language except for foreign language lessons. In Singapore, English is taught as a first language, is an exception.

In India, Hindi and English are both official languages of the Government of India and are both compulsory languages to be learnt in a number of schools. Also, the language learning varies according to states.

In all European Union school systems, it is mandatory to study at least one foreign language at some stage during the school career apart from their regional language. There is a tendency for this to start earlier, even in the first year of primary school. The most common language that is learnt in addition to their regional language is English followed by French, German and so on.

In the Middle East and North Africa, language study varies from one country to another, usually depending on the foreign nation that colonized or occupied the country. For instance, in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, French is the most widely studied language besides the native Arabic, while in Egypt and the Persian Gulf countries (such as the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Oman), English is the main supplementary language.

Language Teaching methods

Language is the primary means by which humans convey meaning, both in spoken and written forms. Human languages possess the properties of productivity and displacement, which enable the creation of an infinite number of sentences, and the ability to refer to objects, events, and ideas that are not immediately present in the discourse. The use of human language relies on social convention and is acquired through learning. It is characterized by its cultural and historical diversity, with significant variations observed between cultures and across time (Evans & Levinson, 2009). Various methods have been proposed by revered scholars for language teaching. Among them the most traditional and popular methods are as follows

Grammar translation was the most popular and widely used method for language teaching between the ages of 1840 & 1940. It placed a lot of emphasis on teaching vocabulary & grammar.

Direct method directed instructions exclusively in target language. It placed a lot of emphasis on teaching every day vocabulary & sentences, in short

to mention day to day activities. Grammar was taught inductively.

Audio-lingual method was similar to direct method. Students are instructed to learn a language directly without using native language for explaining new words or grammar in the target language. It did not focus on vocabulary.

The communicative approach is based on the involvement of learners in real communication. Upon involvement their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used which allows them to learn the language.

Suggestopedia is based on the modern understanding of how the human brain works and how we learn most effectively. It places a lot of emphasis on rich sensory learning environments such as pictures, colours, music, drama, songs, games etc. It involves the use of flash cards, real objects in and around the classroom environment, exercises on puzzles and riddles, real-time

applications like music and songs, role-plays, quiz and games.

Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences proposes that intelligence is not a single ability but a collection of distinct types (Gardner, 1983). He identified eight intelligences, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. Gardner's theory suggests that everyone has different strengths and learning styles across these areas.

Howard Gardner first proposed the theory of multiple intelligences in his 1983 book *Frames of Mind*, where he broadens the definition of intelligence and outlines several distinct types of intellectual competencies. He states that we may all have these intelligences, but our rating of these intelligences may differ individually based on genetics or experience.



Gardner defines intelligence as a "biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner, 2000, p.28). Though he has identified eight intelligences, he states that the linguistic and logical-mathematical modalities are most typed valued in school and society.

The Lexical Approach is a language teaching methodology that emphasizes the importance of words and word combinations as the core elements of language. The traditional technology emphasises on grammar whereas the modern lexical approach emphasises that vocabulary is of utmost importance and it promotes the language through the use of multi-word "chunks" or phrases.

It lays emphasis on the meaning of the words to enable the students to be aware of that context

influences the word usage. The meaning of the word differs according to the context and the context selects the usage of the words. This way it fosters a more natural and native like fluency in learners. This methodology influences the words and word combinations as the basic foundation of language. Language teaching under this approach attempts to build vocabulary and raise student's awareness of language patterns.

For many years, discussions often centered the issues such as role of vocabulary and grammar in language teaching, the choice of syllabus, learning theories and their application, effective learning strategies and the role of material and technologies. Different methods proliferated throughout the 20th centuries and some methods achieved universal popularity and acceptance. Although some methods had wider acceptance, scientists are on the

verge of founding new approaches as all approaches had their own flaws. A language teaching and learning method is at its fullest upon the involvement of 4 techniques. Those were reading, writing, understanding and speaking of a language.

Example: Many methods would have been profited in many places that has been founded by the scientists. In my opinion, I wish to quote one practical application-Weekly Language Library Hour. Now a days most of the schools follows a curriculum that is not restricted to academics. The activities that had been mentioned as academics in those days turned as extra-curricular in the present. Most of the schools have one or two library hours in a week. This hour must be implemented at least once in a week. Learners are divided into groups and each group is assigned with the same chapters. Each member is assigned with the different sheets of the same chapter. One group explains and others observe. One group raises questions from the observation and others provide answers in oral and written form. This fulfils all the 4T's – reading, speaking, understanding and writing. The chapters need not be necessarily the chapters as such. It can be started with alphabets, 2 letter, 3 letter words with a gradual increase and then from small sentences to few big ones. The above mentioned is one small example of teaching a language which could be easily implemented in all schools. Pictures speaks louder than lectures. Puzzles, games, role-play can be organised with the picture based activity along with AI which makes the task easier and smarter. The activities vary according to the levels of language learning from basic to advanced.

Conclusion

For a layman, language is a tool for conveying the meaning of messages that is transformed from one person to another in oral or written form. For proper and effective communication, the encoder should encode the message through proper communication channel for the decoder to decode the message to get the right meaning and purpose of the message.

For researchers it is more than a tool for communication. Many researches proliferated throughout the centuries involving the evolvement of language, use of language, how the sound, signs, symbols turned into a proper oral and written language, linguistics which is the scientific study of language and many more.

All the languages don't own its oral and written form. Some languages owned only its oral form which in turn are not in the finite path. Many oral languages had been extincted and some are on the

verge of extinction. For a language to be cherished for centuries it has to be learnt by the learners in an effective manner. For a language to be learnt in an effective manner, all the 4T's should be fulfilled.

Many methods proliferated throughout the centuries and some methods gained wider acceptance across the globe. With the innovation and replacement of the old methods proves that every method has its own merits and demerits. Languages differ from country to country. Within the country it differs from region to region. Within the region it differs from one place to another in way of dialects.

Thus, one cannot strictly adhere to one method for teaching language. The combination of methods as mentioned in the example above could be better based on region's requirement and individuals' ability.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have supported and guided me in completing this study on "*Language Teaching Method.*"

First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt thanks to my guide/supervisor for their invaluable guidance, continuous encouragement, and insightful suggestions throughout the research process. Their support has been instrumental in shaping this work.

I am also grateful to the educators, language experts, and institutions whose knowledge, teaching practices, and resources contributed significantly to this study. Their contributions helped enhance my understanding of various language teaching methods.

I would like to acknowledge the scholars and researchers whose works in the field of linguistics and education provided a strong theoretical foundation for this study.

My sincere appreciation goes to my colleagues and friends for their encouragement, constructive feedback, and motivation during the course of this research.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper

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