

METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract:

This article explores various methods used in teaching English in higher education institutions. It highlights the evolution of instructional strategies from traditional grammar-translation approaches to modern communicative and digital methods. The paper analyzes the strengths and limitations of each method and emphasizes the importance of adapting teaching styles to meet the needs of diverse learners in contemporary academic environments.

Keywords: English language teaching, higher education, teaching methods, communicative approach, blended learning, language acquisition.

In the globalized world of the 21st century, English has emerged as the dominant international language of communication, science, and academia. As such, higher education institutions around the world have prioritized the effective teaching of English to equip students with the language skills necessary for academic success and career development. The methods employed in teaching English have evolved significantly over the past decades, influenced by pedagogical research, technological advancements, and shifting learner needs.

The method of teaching English through reading and translating texts has existed since the 19th century. This approach developed language comprehension and vocabulary through texts and their translations, focusing on grammar and translation skills, without paying much attention to speaking practice and listening comprehension. By the mid-20th century, the focus shifted to listening skills, which led to the emergence of the audiolingual method. This method emphasized listening to and repeating real speech by native speakers. It aimed to develop listening comprehension through the use of audio materials to mimic and memorize language structures. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the communicative method emerged, with its main focus on developing communicative skills, i.e., the practical use of the language in real-life situations and student interaction. The main goal of the “English Language and Communication” course is to enable students to speak English in various contexts.

Modern methods of teaching English are based on classical approaches to foreign language learning. However, they have been influenced by psychological aspects, foreign cinema, and information technologies. The methods used 20 years ago have now become much more diverse in nature. Tasks such as learning vocabulary, reading a text, listening to an audio recording, or writing a letter are typically assigned by the teacher. Perhaps that is why many

adults who have studied English for years can read and write, but still struggle to speak it fluently.

Contemporary teaching methods have replaced rote memorization with interactive approaches. Today's education focuses on the interaction between the student and the teacher. The curriculum is designed primarily with the age-specific characteristics of learners in mind. The most effective format for preschool and early elementary school students includes games, adventures, videos, races, and more. Older students, on the other hand, tend to prefer more traditional lessons, which include age-appropriate tasks such as writing stories, doing exercises, reading texts, and listening activities. Storytelling helps learners use both active and passive phrases, expand their vocabulary, and improve their speaking skills. Practical exercises help reinforce grammar material. Reading not only improves reading comprehension but also immerses learners in the culture and traditions of the language. Listening improves understanding of spoken English.

However, it is important to remember that the most effective ways to learn English are interactive. That's why **language immersion** is very popular today. This method teaches students to "think" in English. Instruction takes place entirely in English. This doesn't just happen in bilingual families—it can also be implemented in a traditional classroom. The teacher should conduct the lesson only in English and use relevant teaching aids. Regardless of the learners' native language, the lesson must be planned so that students understand the teacher. A highly qualified teacher can carry out such a lesson even with the youngest learners. In the past, parents of preschool and elementary school children were afraid of this method, but today, seeing their children's enthusiasm and success, they recognize its effectiveness. After all, the best way to learn English is to make learning interesting.

Many teachers now combine different methods, blending language immersion with traditional instruction. Knowledge of teaching methods, psychology, and pedagogy enables teachers to understand the emotional and cognitive characteristics of students and to choose the appropriate methods and activities. In addition to English lessons, other forms of educational activities have become popular: round tables, performances, language clubs, conferences, Olympiads, and more. These activities help immerse a large number of students in the language environment. As interest grows, so do the skills.

If the question of how to teach conversational English was once open, today it is possible to teach anyone to speak a foreign language—regardless of age. Of course, older learners may face more challenges. However, success depends more on the learner's initial knowledge, enthusiasm, and effort than on age. The immersion method allows not only for language acquisition but also for the productive use of free time. Its main feature is that the teacher not only teaches but also ensures focused engagement with the topic. Traditional homework is

replaced by tasks such as watching movies in English, speaking in English at home, listening to music, and completing related exercises.

Watching movies in English not only teaches language comprehension but also brings enjoyment. It improves understanding and helps learners express themselves more clearly in English. Listening to spoken language in a native context enhances speaking skills. After such experiences, no foreigner will seem intimidating! Listening to English-language music is no longer new, but it remains a fun and engaging way to absorb the language. Recently, **video games in English** have also gained popularity—not only among children but also adults. These include not just educational games, but also story-driven games, arcade games, simulators, role-playing games, and more.

In modern English language instruction, hybrid methods combine both oral and written exercises, as well as traditional and innovative approaches. Let's start by reviewing traditional teaching methods:

The **project-based method** is considered one of the most effective approaches, engaging students through various activities such as role-playing, research projects, multimedia presentations, and creative tasks. These motivate students and ensure the practical application of learning materials.

The **reading method**, initially developed by I. Frank, is based on passive learning through reading adapted texts with parallel translations and explanations of individual words. It improves language skills in a comfortable environment, stimulates associative thinking, and helps memorize new vocabulary through engaging content.

The **audio method**, which involves listening to a foreign language and memorizing new words through analogy—using dialogues, grammar and vocabulary practice, and real-life communication in English—is widely used in various educational institutions (universities and language schools) and is suitable for both group and individual sessions.

The **self-study program** involves independent language learning using structured materials and practical application of acquired knowledge. It is often used in online education and is characterized by a well-designed curriculum and flexible learning schedules.

The **power principle** focuses on rapid language acquisition by memorizing common phrases and intensive practice. It is popular among learners aiming to achieve business communication goals within a short period.

As for **innovative methods**, their main feature is the use of modern technologies such as interactive whiteboards, computers, the Internet, and multimedia resources. These methods allow students to choose tasks, projects, and topics, increasing their enthusiasm and interest in learning English. This is achieved through the implementation of various learning formats and the use of diverse informational and educational resources available online.

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is a method that involves studying subjects, such as the history of English-speaking countries, in English.

The landscape of English language teaching in higher education continues to evolve. While traditional methods laid the groundwork, modern approaches—especially communicative and technology-based ones—offer more effective and engaging ways to develop students' language skills. Educators should strive to combine multiple methods, adapting them to their learners' needs, institutional goals, and the ever-changing demands of the global environment.

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