# A Comparison of Instructional Methods in Language Teaching in Terms of Teaching Grammar

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Abstract: Grammar plays a key role in foreign language teaching since comprehension does not occur without it. Grammar allows language learners to shape the order and organization of knowledge they acquire in the learning process. Learners become aware of functions of language through grammar knowledge, thus to progress effectively in the target language, grammar is essential. When learners understand the language concepts such as adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, etc. they stand a better chance of using the language with great capability. Grammar teaching is drawing the attention of learners through using instructional techniques to some specific grammatical structures to help them understand and process it. The better learners understand the use of grammatical structures, the more competence they have for using the language skills. This article compares five instructional methods in language teaching in terms of grammar teaching.

Keywords: Grammar Teaching, Method, Effectiveness, Language Learning

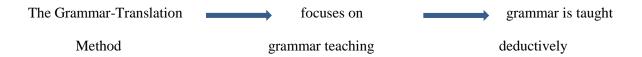
#### 1. Introduction

Wilcox (2004) defines grammar as "a system of rules which allows the users of the language in question to create meaning, by building both meaningful words and larger constructions of sentences" (p. 23). Grammar involves a set of rules that enables language learners to understand a language and produce accurate expressions. Grammar teaching allows learners to recognize target linguistic features. Language learners need to know these features work in sentences in order to use the language accurately. It goes without saying that the effective use of a language with great capability highly depends on understanding of its grammar. It is true to say that the ability of having good grammar knowledge results in performing well in target language. Development of language skills and attainment of proficiency in the target language should be supported by grammar. Grammar is an essential element in order to enable learners to make progress in language learning. Many methods are used in the language classroom to teach grammar. This article compares five methods in language learning, particularly the paper focuses on how these methods deal with grammar teaching.

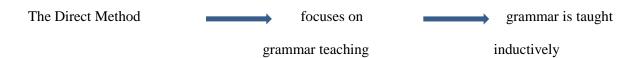
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## 2. Grammar Teaching in Different Methods

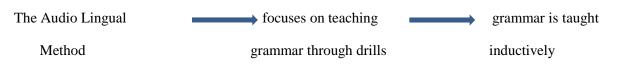
The Grammar-Translation method was used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its major focus was on understanding literary texts. In order to enable learners to read and understand literature, the Grammar-Translation method attended to vocabulary and grammar. The Grammar-Translation method aimed at teaching grammar to learners so that they gain accuracy in the target language. Speaking and listening received almost no systematic attention because comprehension of literary texts was considered as the fundamental purpose of language learning. Grammar rules in this method were presented deductively to learners (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Besides, learners were required to memorize grammatical rules (Brown, 2000).



The Direct method was used at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries. This method was based on the idea that second language learning should be implemented like first language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). For that reason, compared with the Grammar-Translation method grammar was presented inductively to language learners (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The Direct method emphasizes correct pronunciation and grammar. New teaching points were introduced through practice.

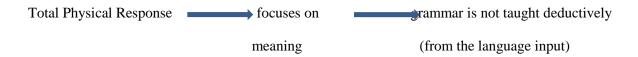


The Audio Lingual method arose between the 1940s and the 1960s. The major goal of the Audio lingual method is to enable learners to use the target language for communication purposes. Explicit grammar rules are not presented and structural patters are introduced by means of dialogues. In the Audio Lingual method very few grammar rules are explained to learners because they are expected to use the language subconsciously like native speakers. Teachers do not spend a great deal of time on talking directly about how target language grammar works; thereby learners induce how grammar functions from the examples provided in the dialogues. Grammar is taught inductively and grammatical structures are presented by means of drilling to promote communication skills.

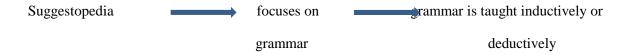


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In Total Physical Response teacher commands are contextualized to focus on the grammatical structures. It was believed that the integration physical command activities into language learning bring about comprehension. Carolyn (1998) argues that before learners engage in speaking comprehension of spoken language must be developed. This method was based on the idea that speaking in the target language emerge naturally hence there is no point in forcing them to speak before they are ready. As learners are expected to understand the grammar rules naturally without any explanations, the way grammar is taught in Total Physical Response has been questioned.



Suggestopedia pays little attention to grammar instruction. Rarely grammatical explanations are provided for learners and explanations are given in the native language of the learners (Carolyn, 1998). Grammar is taught either implicitly or explicitly. In implicit instruction, learners try to discover the grammar rules by themselves because teachers do not provide grammar rules. In implicit instruction learners infer the rules from the input provided for them (Ellis et al., 2009). In other words, implicit knowledge is gained unconsciously. Ellis (2006) argues that implicit instruction of grammar is believed to contribute to fluent communication. On the other hand, explicit instruction of grammar is conducted through teacher-centered instruction. When teachers explain grammatical rules, learners can notice grammatical structures and become aware how they are used.



#### 3. Conclusion

Grammar teaching has long been debated. While some instructional methods pay a great deal attention to it for accuracy development, some ignores it. Grammar is an essential component for language proficiency development. Leaners need to know how to use the target language accurately; therefore, it is important that learners understand the functions of grammatical structures in texts. Some methods such as Grammar-Translation method puts great emphasis on grammar and teaches it deductively. Others such as Direct Method, Total Physical response, The Audio Lingual Method teach grammar inductively and allow language learners to induce the grammatical forms by themselves. Suggestopedia teaches grammar in either way.

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