

ELT Methodologies: Theoretical Backgrounds and L1 Use

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Abstract

This study aims to reframe the six major English language teaching (ELT) methodologies in terms of the theory of language, theory of learning, views on language teaching, and first language (L1) use. Based on Richards and Rodgers (2014), the first section re-categorizes the language theories according to four perspectives—linguistic, socio-linguistic, psycholinguistic, and constructivism. It also categorizes learning theories according to two perspectives—psycholinguistics and constructivism. The next section discusses two views of teaching language—deductive and inductive approaches. Finally, this paper discusses six major ELT methodologies—grammar translation method (GTM), direct method, audio-lingual method, cognitive-code learning, communicative language teaching (CLT), and content and language integrated learning (CLIL)—according to the three criteria presented earlier. The research findings suggest that L1 use is allowed in five out of six methodologies, either partially or as the primary language of instruction in the classroom. Interestingly, CLT initially incorporated a strict monolingual policy. However, based on the results of the past 20 years, L1 use has been allowed in CLT.

Keywords: ELT Methodologies, theory of language, theory of learning, L1 use

English language teaching (ELT) plays a crucial role in our current global society where acquiring English proficiency is one of the most critical skills needed to succeed. However, even though research on ELT has a long history, there is no unified conclusion on how, what, and when we should teach students in order to yield the best outcome. There are many factors that facilitate or hinder the development of learners' proficiency, and all of them cannot be discussed in detail in this article due to space constraints. As one of the most controversial factors is the use of the first language (L1), this article reviews the major ELT methodologies in terms of L1 use in classrooms to explore new insights on how we can facilitate the development of English proficiency. First, following Richards and Rodgers (2014), I discuss several essential dimensions and criteria of ELT methodologies. Then, I discuss how L1 is perceived in the major

ELT methodologies: grammar translation method (GTM), direct method, audio-lingualism, cognitive-code learning, communicative language teaching (CLT), and content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

Theoretical Background of ELT Methodologies

Before reviewing the ELT methodologies, it is necessary to clarify the key concepts used in ELT methodology research. According to Richards (2015), ELT methodologies use the theory of language and the theory of learning as their theoretical background. In this chapter, in addition to these two key theoretical backgrounds, a view of language teaching (or how language can be taught) will be discussed.

Theory of Language

Richards and Rodgers (2014) introduces seven distinctive models which have made an impact on ELT: cognitive model, structural model, functional model, interactional model, sociocultural model, genre model, and lexical model. These seven models can be broadly categorized according to the following four perspectives: linguistic perspective, psycholinguistic perspective, socio-linguistic perspective, and social interactional perspective. In this section, I will categorize the seven models developed by Richards and Rodgers (2014) according to these four perspectives.

Linguistic perspective. The linguistic perspective is one that has been influenced by linguistics and phonology. The structural model views language as a system of structurally related elements of phonological, lexical and grammatical elements for the coding of meaning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Socio-linguistic perspectives. The socio-linguistic perspective concerns the relationship between a language and the social contexts where the language is used. The “functional model” of Richards and Rodgers (2014) is categorized in this perspective. Functional model views a language as a vehicle for carrying out social activities. The functional model of successful communication through language requires not only structural knowledge of language, but also socio-linguistic, discourse and strategic knowledge known as communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1981). Socio-linguistic competence relates to the knowledge of when to use specific language, such as when to say, “I am sorry.” Discourse competence relates

to the knowledge of using proper logic when using language, such as knowing the elements of telling a story. Strategic knowledge refers to the strategic techniques used to convey meaning or persuasion. For example, we usually simulate and prepare for the answers in the specific situations such as job interviews to succeed in acquiring a new job. The “genre model” of Richards and Rodgers (2014) is another model based on socio-linguistic perspectives. The genre model is interested in categorizing language norms according to themes such as business or science or according to text types such as narratives and descriptions (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The genre model was heavily influenced by Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics.

Psycholinguistic perspectives. Psycholinguistic views of language focus on the relationship between language and mental processes. Psycholinguistic views have been influenced by cognitive psychology and linguistics. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), there are two different types of models: cognitive and lexical. The cognitive model views language as “properties of the mind” (Richards, 2015, p. 23). Language is processed through a combination of encoding, storage, and retrieval. As can be seen in Chomsky’s theory of universal grammar, human beings are innately equipped with the ability to detect the basic structure of language. This view of language that considers the human mind as a computer developed through the rise of cognitive psychology in the 1950s. Cognitivists believe that a human being tries to create a new visual image that is independent of language in the process of understanding a text (Kintsch, 1986). The other is the lexical model, which is a relatively recent model that views language as a network in which all lexical and syntactic items are interlinked (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The lexical model originated from psychological research on semantic memory.

Constructivism Perspective. The constructivism perspective views language as a vehicle to convey meanings between human beings. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), there are two types of models: interactional and sociocultural. The interactional model views language as a vehicle to realize interpersonal or social transactions through negotiations. Negotiation of meanings is the central tenet of the interactional view. The related view is called the sociocultural model. The sociocultural model views language as a vehicle for creating new knowledge through social interactions. The major difference between the interactional and sociocultural models is that the former focuses more on interpersonal aspects while the latter

focuses more on sociocultural differences.

This section sketched out the theories of languages behind my approach to explain the four major categories. First is the linguistic perspective, where the central focus is on the linguistic aspect of the target language. Second is the socio-linguistic perspective, with a focus not only on syntactic and lexical items, but also on the context where the language is used. Third is the psycholinguistic perspective, which focuses on language processing in individuals. The final perspective is constructivism, where language is viewed as a vehicle for human activities. Figure 1 illustrates the distinctive features of each perspective.

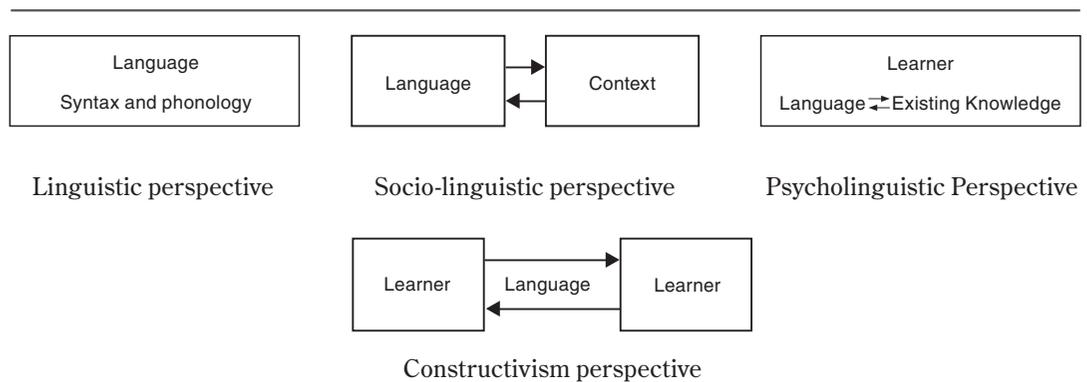


Figure 1 *Images of four major perspectives of language theories behind approach*

Theory of Learning

This section discusses the other elements of my approach, theories of learning based on Richards and Rodgers (2014), and how I recategorize the theories. The theory of language was categorized according to four perspectives. However, the theory of learning can be categorized according to the following two perspectives: psycholinguistic and constructivism.

Psycholinguistic perspective. Behaviorism considers language learning as a “habit formation” (Skinner, 1957). Language learning will occur by memorizing correct inputs through drills and repetitions. Behaviorism provided the foundation of the audio-lingual method. In reaction to the audio-lingual method, Carrol and Chastain developed an alternative method called cognitive-code learning (Richards, 2015). Cognitive-code learning, in contrast to the audio-lingual method, sees language learning as a mental process that requires not only drills and repetitions, but also

meaningful exercises (Richards, 2015). Chastain and Woerdehoff (1968) points out the three key features in cognitive-code learning. First, all exercises are designed to facilitate understanding of grammar concepts. Second, new grammar points should be deductively explained before any exercise. Finally, all four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) are introduced at the beginning of the language course. The cognitive-code learning approach gave the foundation for the Presentation Practice Production (PPP approach) in Situational Language Teaching (Richards, 2015). The creative-construction hypothesis considers language acquisition as not mere reproduction from memorized input, but as a “creative process that has common features regardless of the learner’s background” (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 26). Errors are considered part of the learning process.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) have been influenced by this learning theory. Skill learning is an concept from motor learning theory. Motor learning theorists believe that human cognitive activities such as learning a language can be managed by hierarchical skills. Among these skills, some cognitive activities are considered as automatic because we do not need to pay attention to carry out those activities, but other skills that require our attention to be carried out are called controlled. For example, introducing oneself in a foreign language for the first time will be considered controlled because we need much more effort to prepare, compared to introducing oneself in the first language, which is considered automatic since we can do it without effort. In addition to Richards and Rodgers (2014), several ELT practitioners have examined the lexical model as a learning theory. The lexical model sees language learning as facilitated by priming effects. The priming effect is a phenomenon that prior exposures to language forms either facilitate or interfere with learning of the target language. The priming paradigm has long been used in the field of psycholinguistic research, but it has only recently been drawing the attention of ELT researchers (Trofimovich & McDonough, 2011).

Constructivism perspectives. The previous section discussed learning theories based on psycholinguistics. This section will examine learning theories from the perspective of constructivism. Constructivism sees the learning of language as a process of reconstructing existing knowledge about language into new knowledge through interactions with a social or physiological environment (Simina & Hamel, 2005). Constructivism perspectives are based on the works of Piaget, Dewey, and Vygotsky (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Even though Richards and Rodgers (2014)

separate interactional theory from constructivism, I included interactional theory in this perspective based on Simina and Hamel (2005) and Richards (2015). Interactional theory considers language learning as occurring in a process through meaningful interactions with peers. Negotiation of meaning is a central tenet in this learning theory. Sociocultural theory views language learning as a social interaction process in which language learning will be facilitated by “scaffolding,” where less advanced learners receive appropriate support from more advanced learners. Scaffolding is gradually reduced as the learners’ skills improve (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

This section discusses the learning theories and categorizes them according to two perspectives: psycholinguistic and constructivism. As a theory of language, the psycholinguistic perspective views language learning as a mental process of individuals, while the constructivism perspective views language learning as a process of interacting with social environments.

Views of Language Teaching: Deductive or Inductive Approach

The former section focused on the language theory and learning theory behind ELT. This section will discuss views on teaching language. ELT professionals have long debated the benefits of teaching grammar rules deductively versus inductively. The deductive approach is to first teach fundamental rules before students practice applying those rules in different contexts. The inductive approach asks students to discover the rules by themselves through exposure to various examples. The deductive approach has a long history. Foreign language teaching started more than 200 years ago using the classic method, which later changed its name to the grammar translation method (GTM). Then Ausubel’s subsumption theory, which states that learning will be facilitated if learners associate meaning to the new knowledge, led to cognitive-code learning, where an explicit explanation of grammar is necessary before practicing any new grammatical items. The direct method and audio-lingual method have been recognized as inductive approaches since learners are expected to learn grammar without explicit explanations. Table 1 contains the benchmarks proposed by Fischer (1979) regarding which approach should be in use according to “the incorporation of contrastive analysis into the framework a theory of learning transfer” (Fischer, 1979, p.101). The basic premise in Fischer (1979) is that the inductive approach is appropriate unless the L2 rules are dissimilar and more complex than L1, since learners can apply their L1 knowledge to understand the rules. However, the debate on which approach should be used continues even today.

Table 1 *Determination of Inductive or Deductive Approach by Means of the Learning Transfer Principle (adopted from Fischer (1979))*

Linguistic structure	L2 rule is similar to L1 rule	L2 rule is dissimilar but simpler than L1 rule	L2 rule is dissimilar and/or more complex than L1 rule
Teaching strategy	Inductive approach in which comparison is made with L1 structure to encourage positive transfer		Deductive approach in which no reference is made to L1 structure to discourage negative transfer

Views of L1 Use in the Classroom in the Four Methods

The last chapter reviewed the three key theoretical backgrounds behind ELT methodologies and discussed the theory of language, theory of learning, and views on teaching language. Based on the previous discussions, this chapter will examine the six distinctive ELT methodologies and how L1 is used in each.

Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

Background. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was introduced in the mid-18th century (Howatt & Smith, 2014). The motives to learn English had increased among educated classes during the 1800s, according to the growing interest in English literature on the European continent. Reading skill had the highest priority. However, the popularity of learning English was not as great as learning Latin, French or Russian. Since there were no sequential materials for beginners, learners had to start by reading advanced materials (such as literature written by famous authors) from their first lesson itself. Many students did not continue this study.

Theoretical background and L1 use in GTM. The focus of GTM is on learning grammar and vocabulary for reading, and translation. GTM is the first model that employed the linguistic perspective and a deductive approach in the method. Instructors used students' L1 to provide instructions on new grammar and vocabulary, and asked students to translate English into their L1 or vice versa. L1 was used both for instructions and understanding the target language. Very little attention was paid to speaking and listening (Griffiths & Parr, 2001). Richards and Rodgers (2014) categorizes GTM as a psycholinguistic model.

Direct Method

Background. The direct method was developed according to phonology, the new science of language, in the 1900s, after the increased demand for speaking skills in a foreign language could not be met by GTM, which was focused mainly on reading and writing (Howatt & Smith, 2014). Howatt and Smith (2014) state that two different movements in Europe and the United States led to establishing the direct method during the 1880s. One movement was curriculum reform in secondary schools in Europe, “shifting the main pedagogical emphasis away from traditional topics like grammar and literature and toward practical command of the modern language” (Howatt & Smith, 2014). The direct method was not only gaining popularity in Europe, but was also imported to Japan in the 1920s by Harold Palmer (Howatt & Smith, 2014). The other approach developed in the United States, where another method focusing on teaching conversation skills to adults in a foreign language was developed at about the same time as curriculum reform in Europe.

Theoretical background and L1 use in the direct method. The direct method was greatly influenced by the linguistic perspective. Unlike classical GTM, the direct method in Europe used sequenced materials in a question-and-answer form, based on the level of difficulty, to help learners keep up with the lessons in classes. L1 was used in teaching vocabulary when this method was introduced at secondary schools, since most of the teachers shared the L1 with students (Howatt & Smith, 2014, p.84). The US version of the direct method was developed in private schools primarily as a way to teach conversation to adults. L1 use was prohibited, and instructors used visual aids and movements to teach vocabularies. In the direct method lessons, grammar was taught inductively.

Audio-lingual method

Background. Even though the direct method gained popularity before World War II, developing reading skills was considered to be the main purpose of formal education until World War II due to the lack of English instructors with enough proficiency to handle the direct method, which required everything to be taught in English (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). However, World War II led to a demand for oral proficiency skills of foreign languages in the US; linguists developed the Army method to teach oral proficiency in a short time (Richards, 2015). After World War II, analysis of the army method through the synthesis of linguistics and psychology led to the development of the audio-lingual method.

Theoretical background and L1 use in audio-lingual method. Audio-lingual method was influenced by the linguistic perspective (structural linguistics) and psycholinguistic perspective (behaviorism). Unlike the direct method, audio-lingual method focuses primarily on oral proficiency. The teaching material was carefully sequenced according to the structural patterns of sentences instead of being sequenced according to the context where those structural patterns were used (Chastain & Woerdehoff, 1968). They were taught through repetition of listening (input) and oral repetition (output) (Richards, 2015). Errors were corrected immediately. In audio-lingual method, grammar was taught inductively and L1 was not used in the classroom.

Cognitive-code learning

Background. In response to audio-lingual method, Chastain and Woerdehoff (1968) created cognitive-code learning during the 1960s. Cognitive-code learning is based on another psychological theory, namely the theory of the development of advance organizer (Ausubel, 1960; 1963), which states that language learning cannot take place with mere repetition; instead, it is necessary for learners to understand the meanings of the rules.

Theoretical background and L1 use in cognitive-code learning. Cognitive-code learning was influenced by the psycholinguistic perspective, particularly by Ausubel's advance organizer theory. While audio-lingualism, which was based on behaviorism theory, believes repetition of input assists language learning, cognitive-code learning added the feature of explicitly instructing new learners on new grammar before any practice, with the belief that learners need to understand the new input before acquiring it. As the name shows, the primary focus of cognitive-code learning was on teaching the structure of the target language. Grammar was deductively taught and L1 was used for instructing students on grammar (see Chastain & Woerdehoff, 1968).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Background. The demand for English proficiency grew stronger due to the increase in foreign travels in the mid-1970s and 1980s. ELT practitioners had to catch up with the need for learners to obtain English proficiency that could be used in real life. At the same time, Chomsky's work, *Universal Grammar* (Chomsky, 1957) and the development of socio-linguistic study, especially with regard to Hymes' theory of

communicative competence (1972), had a great impact on ELT methodology research in 1970 and led to the development of CLT. In contrast to audio-lingual method the CLT practitioner believes that language will be learned in the context of its use. The idea of Chomsky's *Universal Grammar*, which suggests that learners are equipped with an innate ability to learn a new language, led to Selinker's work on interlanguage systems (Selinker, 1972). Selinker suggests that learners are perceived as positive information processors who try to abstract the principles and rules of input; under Selinker, errors indicated learning.

Theoretical background and L1 use in CLT. As we have seen, CLT has been greatly influenced by socio-linguistic perspectives. Lesson styles vary, but according to Richards (2015), the priorities included in Table 2 are the distinctive activities utilized in the lesson. In the classroom, the main role of instructors is to facilitate learners' meaningful communication with peers or understanding of presented materials. Authentic materials are used as visual aids or text materials. Two different views on teaching grammar exist in CLT: one is to teach grammar inductively and the other is to teach grammar deductively (Fotos, 1994; Gollin, 1998; Herron & Tomasello, 1992; Nitta & Gardner, 2005; Shaffer, 1989).

Table 2 *Communicative Practice in CLT (adopted from Richards, 2015)*

Activities	Content
Information-gap activities	Activities that require learners to communicate in order to get information they do not possess
Jigsaw activities	Activities in which the class is divided into groups, and each group has part of the information needed to complete the activity
Task-completion activities	Puzzles, games, map-reading, and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus is on using one's language resources to complete a task
Information-gathering activities	Student-conducted surveys, interviews, and searches in which students are required to use their linguistic resources to collect information
Opinion-sharing activities	Activities where students compare values, opinions, and beliefs, such as a ranking task in which students list six qualities, in order of importance, that they might consider when choosing a date or a spouse

When CLT was first introduced in the late 1970s through the 1990s, L1 use was strictly prohibited in the classroom. However, since the 1990s, research on L1 use in CLT has emerged since a monolingual policy in the classroom has limitations in facilitating learners' interaction in the target language (e.g., Carless, 2007; Copland & Neokleous, 2010; Cummins, 2007; Hall & Cook, 2014; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Nation, 2003; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). According to the previous literature reviews, there were three main purposes for using L1 in CLT classrooms: for instruction, including explanations of new vocabulary; for filling gaps between the learner's English proficiency and L1 proficiency; and to create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom. The new aspect with regard to L1 use in the classroom (as compared to the past methodologies described earlier) concerns its use to facilitate communication between instructors and learners, as well as communication among learners.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Background. Since the increase of mobility in academics and language policy changes in the European Union (EU), ELT practitioners have faced the demand of improving academic skills in English. To respond to this demand, the framework of teaching both subject content and foreign language skills as content, or integrated language learning, emerged in the EU at the beginning of the 1990s. There is a similar concept in North America, called content based language teaching (CBLT) but there is one major difference between CLIL and CBLT: the former will be taught by non-ELT specialists who are experts in course content, such as elementary school teachers who teach subjects other than English, but the latter (CBLT) will be taught by ELT specialists who are non-experts in the content area (Nakayama, 2017; Richards, 2015).

Theoretical background and L1 use in CLIL. CLIL was greatly influenced by the interactional perspective of language and the constructivism perspective of learning theory. CLIL was introduced in the early 1990s in Europe (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). As the name suggests, CLIL focuses on teaching content and language at the same time. CLIL has gained popularity, especially in primary and secondary education in the EU, and is currently gaining attention in Japan as well. Learners are expected to participate in group work and discussions, as it is believed that learning will be facilitated through interactions with peers, which is the basic premise of constructivism. Instructors are usually non-ELT specialists but specialists in content area. The code switching between L1 and the target language is referred to as *translanguaging*, and is considered one of the essential concepts to promote learning of

both content and language (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Nakayama, 2017). Therefore, L1 is used in many contexts such as instructions and activities in the classroom. Grammar can be taught either deductively or inductively, depending on the learners' proficiency levels or classroom contexts.

This article discussed six major ELT methodologies based on the perspectives of previous discussions on language theory, learning theory, language teaching views, and L1 use. In this section, I will summarize the discussions by illustrating the features of those six ELT methodologies in perspectives of language theory, learning theory, language teaching views, and L1 use. Table 3 shows the results of findings through previous research.

Table 3 *Description of Six ELT Methodologies in Language theory, Learning theory, Views on Language Teaching and L1 Use*

Methodology	Language Theory	Learning Theory	Views of Language Teaching	L1 use
GTM	Linguistics		Deductive	Instruction
Direct method	Linguistics		Inductive	*Instruction
Audio-lingualism	Psycholinguistic	Psycholinguistic	Inductive	Prohibited
Cognitive-code learning	Psycholinguistic	Psycholinguistic	Deductive	Instructions
CLT	Socio-linguistics Interactional	Constructivism	Inductive Deductive	Instruction Interaction
CLIL	Interactional	Constructivism	Deductive Inductive	Instruction Interaction

*L1 use was encouraged only in the initial stage when the direct method was introduced in 19th century in Europe.

As Table 3 shows, regardless of the language theory and learning theory behind each methodology, L1 was used in five out of six methodologies, as either the partial or main medium of instruction in the classroom. It was not used in audio-lingual method. Surprisingly, even though CLT started as a monolingual approach, L1 use has been accepted after 20 years of the implementation of CLT. L1 use in the classroom is still under debate among ELT researchers, but most researchers agree to the use of L1 in certain ways (Ex. Carless, 2007; Copland & Neokleous, 2010; Cummins, 2007; Hall & Cook, 2014; Nation, 2003; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Storch &

Wigglesworth, 2003). Furthermore, the purpose of L1 use has changed according to the paradigm changes. Until CLT was introduced in the 1980s, L1 use was limited only to instruction of grammar or vocabulary. However, in CLT or CLIL, where interaction is the basis of language learning, L1 is used not only to give instructions, but also as a way to facilitate interactions between instructors and students or among students to fill the language gap between English and L1. One of the current ELT research interests is how learning the target language can be facilitated with the appropriate use of L1. Since this topic is beyond the scope of this paper, another literature review is necessary to develop this topic.

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