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## ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS IN AZERBAIJAN

*Due to globalization, the integration of countries and people is going faster than ever. In such a situation, the teaching of foreign languages, especially English, which has become an international language, has become important in all countries. Every state in the world focuses on English language teaching in their educational institutions.*

*It is the same for Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan, a former Soviet country, is trying to move away from the educational ideologies of the Soviet era and choose a new education model and path. Simply, it isn't an easy task to replace the outdated approaches with the new and progressive ones because people always react changes and innovations. It is one of the most challenging tasks to alternate the acquired teaching habits with new ones. For that reason, a few traditional approaches are still dominant such as Grammar-translation method which is still used commonly by some teachers both at schools and universities, however, new methods and approaches are also included in the repertoire of teachers due to competitive environment. The main question arising here is "Which new methods?" as we know a number of new methodologies appear every passing day. In this case, what is the choice of teachers about new methodologies?*

*In our article, we tried to find out advanced and innovative teaching methodologies that are preferred by the Azerbaijani teachers and the extent of their application based on the online survey we designed and conducted among 50 university and school teachers from different regions of Azerbaijan and the review of the articles published in the three main journals of Azerbaijan between 2020–2022. We have compared the findings which are quite interesting because the survey and article review results contradicted each other to a great extent. According to the article review results, research interest in modern and innovative approaches is pretty low compared with the practically application of them in teaching process.*

**Key words:** English, innovative methodologies, grammar-translation method, survey, primary method, teachers.

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## МЕТОДИКА ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНІ

*Завдяки глобалізації інтеграція країн і людей відбувається швидше, ніж будь-коли. У такій ситуації в усіх країнах важливого значення набуло викладання іноземних мов, особливо англійської, яка стала міжнародною. Кожна держава світу робить акцент на викладанні англійської мови у своїх навчальних закладах.*

*Те саме стосується Азербайджану. Азербайджан, колишня радянська країна, намагається відійти від освітніх ідеологій радянської епохи та обрати нову освітню модель і шлях. Просто замінити застарілі підходи на нові прогресивні – нелегка справа, тому що люди завжди реагують на зміни та інновації. Чергувати набуті педагогічні звички новими є одним із найскладніших завдань. З цієї причини кілька традиційних підходів все ще домінують, наприклад метод граматичного перекладу, який все ще широко використовується деякими вчителями як у школ, так і в університетах, однак нові методи та підходи також включені до репертуару вчителів через конкурентне середовище. Головне питання, яке тут виникає, це «Які нові методи?» як ми знаємо, щодня з'являється ряд нових методологій. Який у цьому випадку вибір вчителів щодо нових методик?*

*У нашій статті ми спробували з'ясувати передові та інноваційні методики навчання, яким віддають перевагу азербайджанські вчителі, і ступінь їх застосування на основі розробленого та проведеного нами онлайн-опитування серед 50 викладачів університетів і шкіл з різних регіонів Азербайджану та огляду статей, опублікованих у трьох основних журналах Азербайджану в 2020–2022 роках. Ми порівняли результати, які є досить цікавими, оскільки результати опитування та огляду статей дуже суперечили один одному. За результатами огляду статті дослідницький інтерес до сучасних та інноваційних підходів є досить низьким порівняно з практичним застосуванням їх у навчальному процесі.*

**Ключові слова:** англійська мова, інноваційні методики, граматико-перекладний метод, опитування, початковий метод, викладачі.

English language education was launched in 1925–1926 when Azerbaijan was a Soviet Republic. For that reason, in Azerbaijan, a former post-Soviet country, remnants of the educational ideology of that era are still observed. This is especially evident in foreign language teaching classes. For example, it is possible to observe the characteristics of the Grammar-Translation method, which was one of the main teaching methods of the Soviet era, in the lessons of many teachers at the moment. It can be said that a large number of teachers still see and use the translation of texts and sentences from the native language into target language or contrary as the main type of activity. Of course, the development of teaching methods and strategies has not been neglected and in the concern of the government. In this regard, many reforms are implemented by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education adopted the “Curriculum” as the main teaching method in schools and tried to convey its essence to teachers by conducting many trainings in this field. Even if it has been successfully applied by many teachers, there are a few teachers who do not want to give up the previous theories and methodologies.

In higher education institutions, the situation is somehow different. Teachers working at the university have complete autonomy in the choice of methods

and resources, which allows them to act more freely, to introduce innovations and to further increase the value and quality of courses. Here too, some teachers have participated in online or face-to-face training, professional development courses, etc, developed themselves through reading and research, and mastered new pedagogical methodologies, but teachers who use the elements of the old Grammar-Translation method is not small in number.

**Problem statement:** both new and old teaching approaches compete each other in the ESL classrooms but the main issue is to clarify that which new methods stand out in this competition as there are lots of new methodologies appeared so far.

**Research methods:** Primary quantitative method, and online survey.

**Purpose of the article.** We decided to study the new teaching methodologies and identify the level of their application by Azerbaijani teachers in the ESL classes.

**Main material.** First, we chose three high prestige journals published in Azerbaijan and reviewed the articles dedicated to any of innovative and modern teaching methodologies published between 2020–2022. The journals are the “Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies” published by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Azerbaijan Republic

Table 1

№	Title	Author	The methodology/ies indicated in the article	Copy
1.	Reading and writing in the development of critical thinking as an active learning technology.	Huseynoglu S.	Active learning method	Journal of Educational Studies. Vol. 700, Issue III, pp.33–42/2022
2.	The ways to develop critical thinking skills in English language teaching.	Suleymanova S.	Project-based learning	Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies. Vol. 699, Issue II, pp. 125–130 (2022)
3.	The role of world literature in the formation of students' planetary thinking	Asadov A.	Parallel teaching method	Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies. Vol. 697, Issue IV, pp. 111–119 (2021)
4.	Ensuring the effectiveness of distance learning in pedagogical education.	Suleymanova A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem-based learning</li> <li>• Project-based learning</li> </ul>	Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies. Vol. 694, Issue I, pp. 25–34 (2021)
5.	Modern Methods of Intercultural Competence Forming in English Language Teaching (ELT) In Tertiary Education	S.R.İmanova,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicative method</li> <li>• Interactive method</li> <li>• Collaborativ method</li> </ul>	Transactions Of Pedagogical University, Issue 1 (2021)
6.	Stages And Characteristics of Lessons Conducted Using the Interactive Learning Method	Hüzürə Hacızadə	Interactive learning method	Scientific Works. 2020, № 1 (102), 83–87
7.	The Effect of Modern Teaching Methods on Student Personality Development	Sevinc Orucova	Active learning method	Scientific Works. 2021, № 1 (110), 103–106

(Baku); the “Transactions of Pedagogical University” Journal published by the Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University (Baku), and the journal of “Scientific Works” published by the Nakhchivan State University (Nakhchivan) (Table 1).

The list of the articles we found.

**Article review findings.** Using the primary quantitative method, we searched for the articles published between 2020–2022 in the journals mentioned above and as a result found only 7 articles. 4 of them have been published in the “Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies”, 1 in the “Transactions of Pedagogical University” and 2 in the “Scientific Works”.

PBL, Active learning and Interactive methods are the most investigated topics, and each has been studied by two authors. They are preceded by Parallel teaching method, Problem-based learning, Communicative method, Collaborative method that have been researched by one author. In total, the number of the articles are less than we expected.

Later, we investigated the most advanced and innovative teaching methods that are very cutting-edge, effective and common due to some articles published on the Internet. Having shortlisted them we chose 8 of them.

We designed survey questions based on our study results. We held an online survey in the Azerbaijani

language among male and female ESL instructors residing and working in the urban and rural schools and universities of Azerbaijan including the capital city.

In the online survey, 50 higher education and school teachers participated, and we have opinions of the 50 people from different regions and educational institutions of Azerbaijan.

According to our survey results, the application of some modern teaching methodologies and strategies are neglected under the influence of past ideologies and traditions, and their use can make a big difference to foreign language teaching lessons. We mention the results below and also briefly explain the methods and their essence for those who haven’t heard about them.

In the survey, we asked the year of teaching experiences, and consequently, most of the respondents have experiences of teaching between 1–5 and 6–10 years, a few of them are over than 16 years.

According to the results, 52% of teachers are working at schools, and 48% at universities (Fig. 1).

We have asked the name of the method they commonly use during teaching process and a large part of teachers have confused, and mentioned activity names, not methods. The most noted method is communicative by 14 teachers (12 university and 2 school teachers), and others are grammar-translation by 1 (a university teacher), direct method by



Fig. 1. Distribution of teachers. Blue-school, red – university



Fig. 2. The methods used by teachers

1 (a university teacher), CLIL by 1 (a university teacher), project-based learning by 2 (2 university teachers), reproductive learning by 3 (1 university and 2 school teachers), active learning by 2 (2 school teachers), game-based learning by 1 (a university teachers) (Fig. 2).

In the next question, we asked directly if they use the Communicative method or not. 82% (41 people) said “Yes”, 12% (6 people) “No”, and 6% (3 people) “I haven’t heard” (Fig. 3).

Another question was “Do you apply “Differentiated Instruction (DI)” in your ESL classes?” and 64% (32 respondents) said “Yes”, 26% (13 respondents) said “No”, and 10% (5 respondents) “I haven’t heard” (Fig. 4).

Differentiated Instruction. It means to tailor classes to meet each student’s needs in the classroom. In this method, teachers differentiate material, activities, products, etc. More flexible environment is created for all students in the group, by this way, they are able to learn at their pace and express the content they customize with alternative ways. Learning outcomes remain the same for all learners but how to get those outcomes is an option and autonomy given to student. This method speeds up the learning process and let all students get maximum benefit from classes.

The question “Do you apply “Kinesthetic Learning” in your ESL classes?” received 48% (24 respondents) “Yes”, 34% (17 respondents) “No”, and 18% (9 respondents) “I haven’t heard” (Fig. 5).



Fig. 3. The question about the use of the Communicative method

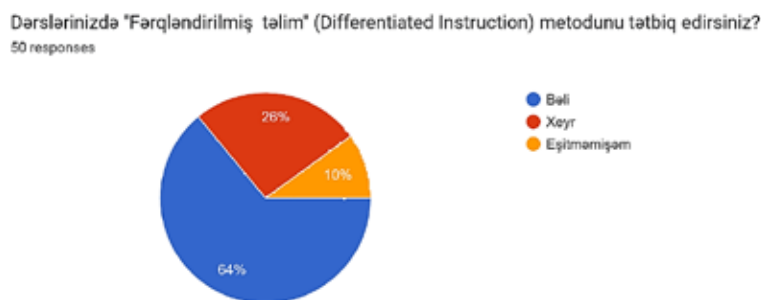


Fig. 4. Application of Differentiated Instruction

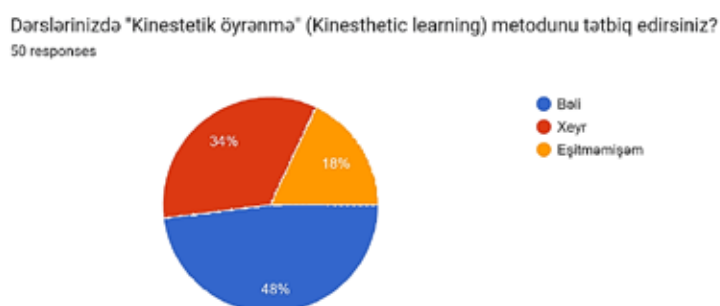
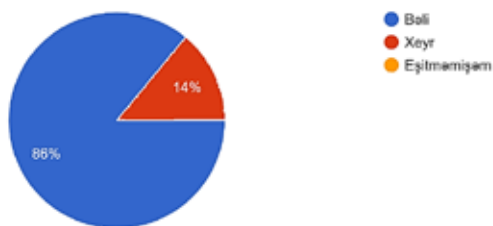


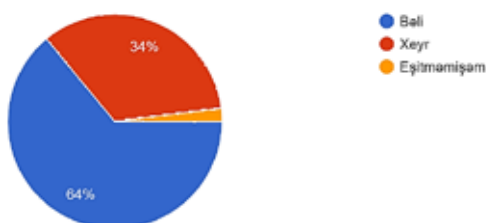
Fig. 5. Application of the Kinesthetic learning

Dərslərinizdə "Oyuna əsaslanan öyrənmə" ( Game-based learning) metodunu tətbiq edirsiniz?  
50 responses



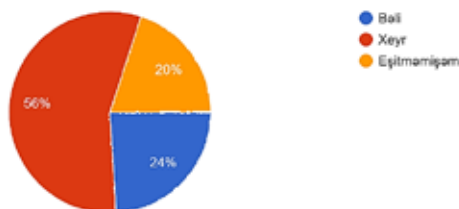
**Fig. 6. Application of the Game-based Learning**

Dərslərinizdə "Layihə əsaslı öyrənmə" ( Project-based learning) metodunu tətbiq edirsiniz?  
50 responses



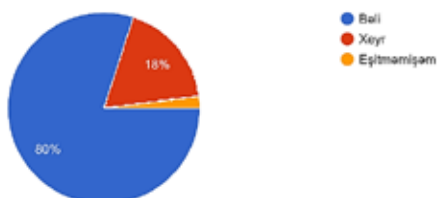
**Fig. 7. Application of the PBL**

Dərslərinizdə "Döndürülmüş sinif" (Flipped classrooms) metodunu tətbiq edirsiniz?  
50 responses



**Fig. 8. Application of the Flipped Classroom**

Dərslərinizdə "Əməkdaşlıq" (Collaborative/Cooperative learning) metodunu tətbiq edirsiniz?  
50 responses



**Fig. 9. Application of the Collaborative/Cooperative learning**

Kinesthetic Learning. It requires physical contact with material to learn it. In order to produce multisensory learning, teachers use auditory and visual materials. In the classes, learners make things such as posters, charts, group projects, etc. and prepare cards, per-

form physical movements, field trips, excursions, etc. By this way, students retain information in their long-term memory and effective especially for little ones.

"Do you apply "Game-based learning" in your ESL classes?". It was replied "Yes" by 86% of the

respondents (43 people) and “No” by 14% (7 people) (Fig. 6).

**Game-based Learning.** GBL is a strategy that combines games and learning environment to achieve self-practice and self-assessment. Teachers choose appropriate elements to apply real life situation. Gamification of classes enables high level of engagement of learners, and at the moment is one of the main trends in teaching foreign languages, especially in higher education institutions.

One of the elements of GBL is digital badging. When students complete their activities or studies, they earn badges and can easily display their level of knowledge to others. By this way, their accomplishments become open to everybody and can be verified by external stake holders.

In classrooms, to perform GBL is highly feasible and only thing needed by teachers is Internet access. A number of educational games and game-based activities have been designed, and they are ready resources for use on the Internet. Most of them are totally free. Alessi and Trollip (2000) categorize educational games as adventure and role-playing games, business games, board games, combat games, logic games and puzzles, and word games. These games can be a single player or multi-players. These kinds of activities are engaging and fun, also changes students’ approach to learning process and improves their problem-solving skills.

The next question we asked was “Do you apply “Project-based Learning” in your ESL classes?”. 64% teachers (32 respondents) said “Yes”, 34% (17 respondents) said “No”, and 2% (1 respondent) “I haven’t heard” (Fig. 7).

**Project-based Learning.** The Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget’s statement “knowledge is a consequence of experience” is clearly depicting the importance of PBL because we live in the world of projects (Martinez 2014). The PBL is a kind of approach in which learners are engaged in gaining knowledge and improving skills by working on a project for a certain

amount of time. In this approach students investigate, and try to solve a problem or a question by using their critical thinking, communication and interaction skills and team work. In order to prepare students for future work life, teachers mostly choose projects based on real life situations.

The question “Do you apply “Flipped classroom” in your ESL classes?” has remarkable responds. 56% (28 people) of the teachers hasn’t applied it, 20% (10 people) hasn’t heard about it. Only 24% (12 people) of the teachers apply it (Fig. 8).

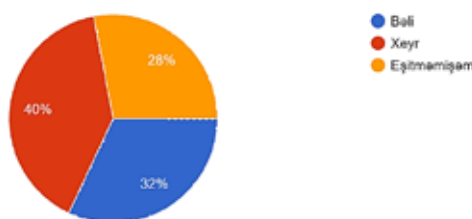
**Flipped classroom.** In this type of training, the course material is delivered to the students in advance to let them study at home. During the classes, teacher consolidate the new knowledge acquired by teachers by further expansion of the topic and practical application. This strategy, which supports the individual learning process, can be easily applied in lectures and practical classes.

In Azerbaijan, new material is presented in the course of the lesson, then its explanation is given, and at the end, knowledge on the subject is strengthened. If the students are familiar with the lecture or lesson material from the beginning, then the parts they do not understand or are difficult may be discussed in the class, and it might increase the effectiveness of the lesson.

Now let’s proceed with the question “Do you apply “Collaborative/Cooperative learning” in your ESL classes?”. 40 teachers that is 80% of the respondents replied as “Yes”, 9 teachers (18%) said “No”. 2% (1 respondent) hasn’t heard about this methodology (Fig. 9).

**Collaborative/Cooperative learning.** Collaborative and Cooperative learning are similar with a few distinctive properties. The core distinction is that collaborative learning that might happen in any situation when students work together. For instance, at home when helping each other about home assignment which can be online, too. However, cooperative learning happens when students work together in the same place, and in a small group.

Dərslərinizdə "UDL" (Universal Design for Learning) metodunu tətbiq edirsiniz?  
50 responses



**Fig. 10. Application of the UDL**

Similarities. The both approaches enable active student participation and social interaction. Students bear responsibility for their own pace of learning, and the role of a teacher is facilitator during the teaching process. In both approaches students' cognitive and team building skills are developed. With group work learning process become more memorable, learners' self-confidence and social skills are strengthened. Students learn to understand and respect different perspectives of others.

We are moving to the next question "Do you apply "Universal Design for Learning" in your ESL classes?" 40% (20 teachers) of the teachers never apply UDL in their ESL classes. 32% (16 teachers) implements during teaching process, however, 28% (14 teachers) haven't heard about this approach (Fig. 10).

**UDL.** It is an approach that encompasses curriculum design and has 3 main components: representation, action and expression, engagement.

**Representation.** It is about what to teach students, in a nutshell the choice of material such as visual information, auditory information, etc. Students customize information in different ways, so the display of the new material should be versatile. For example, slide presentations, pdf, podcast, sound, colourful fonts, and highlights and others.

**Action and Expression.** It is about how to teach, and its essence is offering different types of activities that suit all students. Students should be allowed to demonstrate their knowledge with alternative modalities during the learning process. Some students are comfortable when they do written tasks but others in oral activities. Learners can be provided with options about physical action and expression.

**Engagement.** How to motivate or engage students into any kind of activity is a challenging issue for teachers because the goal of learning differs from students to students. UDL claims that it isn't possible to engage all students by utilizing an option that appeals all students and their area of interest. Thus, teachers should offer multiple options for all students.

### **The analysis of the survey findings.**

Looking at the collected data from a predefined group of teachers to uncover insights about the application of advanced and innovative teaching methodologies, interesting view appears in front of us. Let's analyse the information we gathered together.

The good point of the survey is that there is a balance among the respondents, half university teachers and half school teachers/

When we ask teachers to name the methods they use in their lessons, we see that teachers have confused the notions of activity and method. Most of the responses mentioned here are classroom activities, not a method, and only Communicative and Pro-

ject-based learning are mentioned by a few teachers. Interestingly, none of the other methods mentioned in the survey are noted by the teachers except for two as we mentioned above.

We see that the communicative method is the most known and applied method among Azerbaijani teachers. High percentage (82%) of the teachers use it during the teaching process, and there are teachers that haven't heard about it. In total, 18% doesn't utilize it.

In the Differentiated Instruction, the situation isn't heart-warming because DI isn't applied by 36% of the teachers, though the imbalance of students' skills and knowledge is inevitable almost in all classrooms.

The Kinesthetic learning which can be very effective and interesting approach in teaching English to children isn't implemented by almost half of teachers, and what is more, there are teachers that haven't heard about it.

Unlike the Kinesthetic learning, the result about Game-based learning is hopeful. Most of teachers use game elements during teaching process but most likely not all of them mean technology-based digital activities because access to technology is limited in the classrooms. In Azerbaijani higher education institutions and schools, the number of the smart classrooms is limited, only a few classrooms with smart boards and projectors in each school and university. Thus, teachers take turns using it.

The result about PBL is astonishing because it is one of the key methods that is offered by numerous training programmes in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, the number of teachers utilizing it is only 64%.

76% doesn't use the flipped classrooms and it is normal because FC is one of the approaches that most of teachers are unaware of it in Azerbaijan. In a traditional lectures or practical classes conducted in Azerbaijan the material is presented during that class not before it.

The percentage of the application of the Collaborative/Cooperative is surprising and the reason is that, there are strict rules about noise control in the classrooms in Azerbaijan. Consequently, group work is mostly ignored, and pair work is more preferable by teachers.

Final question is about UDL which is one of the latest methods developed in the USA, and new for most of countries and teachers. Normally, it isn't applied by 68% in total.

**Comparison.** The survey results show a wide range of methods are known and applied by teachers; however, the article review shows that most of updated methods are ignored and not researched enough. What is more, due to the survey result the most known and applied method is Communicative

method, but when comes to research project-based learning dominates.

**Conclusion.** Of course, taking into account the number of participants in the survey, it is impossible to get a completely accurate result. However, it is enough to form a certain opinion as the ratio of women-men, rural-urban, school-university is taken into account in the survey. However, in the next stages, it is possible to obtain more complete information by conducting a separate survey between women and men, rural and urban schools and universities, taking into account the results in a comparative manner. Again, the survey gives a common insight.

In the meantime, our article review covers only three journals and 2 years of interval. For more

accurate result it can be expanded as a follow-up of the research in future.

Based on the findings from both studies we can say see that most teachers prefer to apply new methodologies practically in their classes but they aren't interested in the research about them considering the number of the articles published in the three high ranking journals between 2020–2022. School teachers aren't required to publish scientific articles due to their job responsibilities but university teachers have to engage in research during their academic activities. For that reason, to some extent, the number of articles can be justified but it is obvious that the interest in the research on teaching methodologies is less compared with their application in the classrooms.

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