

### 3. The Bilingual Method

The bilingual method is comparatively a recent method developed by Prof. C.J. Dodson of Wales. This method stands for the use of two languages i.e., the vernacular and the target language in teaching second language. This method is based on the similarities and differences which exists between two languages.

The similarities and differences may be of situation, sounds, vocabulary, structures and so on. When a child learns a foreign language, he becomes familiar with the situations and picks up the language correctly. While learning the foreign language, the situations are created in order to make the child learn the language. The advocates of this method believe that it is merely a waste of time as there is duplicity of the same thing. So there is no need of creating the situation again and time saved must be utilised for giving practice in sentence pattern.

#### *Philosophy behind the Bilingual Method*

When a child learns his vernacular, he forms the concept and grasps the situation and learns the meaning of words simultaneously. The advocates of the Bilingual Method believe that it is a waste of time to recreate the situation while teaching a foreign language. Their argument is that teaching-learning process is facilitated if only the vernacular, equivalents are given to the learner without duplicating the situation. The Bilingual Method, therefore, makes use of the mother tongue in this restricted manner.

*Disadvantages*

1. A possible disadvantage of the method is that if the teacher is not imaginative enough, this method may degenerate into the Grammar Translation Method with all the attendant drawbacks.
2. The Bilingual Method is useful at the secondary stage; the Direct Method is more useful than the Bilingual Method at the primary stage.
3. This method can confuse the students due to contrast between the features of two languages i.e., English and mother tongue.
4. It is not possible to provide an exact word which is equivalent to the vernacular.
5. The bad habit of learning everything by filtering through mother tongue may be formed.

The bilingual method is worth trying in India. This method is suitable for both the students and the teacher because of its time saving characteristics. The teacher can handle it with confidence without bothering for the creation of situations in the class with teaching aids.

## Difference between Grammar Translation Method and Bilingual Method

It differs from the Grammar Translation Method in two ways:

1. In the Bilingual Method it is the teacher who always makes use of the mother tongue to explain meanings and not the students.
2. The learner is sufficiently subjected to sentence pattern drills, which are not provided in the Grammar Translation Method. Moreover, in the Bilingual Method reading and writing are introduced early in the course of language teaching and there is an integration of the speaking and writing skills. **Table 12.3** highlights the differences between the three methods.

**Table 12.3:** Differences between Translation/Direct/Bilingual/Method

<i>Translation method</i>	<i>Direct method</i>	<i>Bilingual method</i>
It is a classical method of teaching.	It came as a reaction to the translation method.	It is a modified version of both the translation method and direct method.
It makes excessive use of the mother tongue.	The use of mother tongue is prohibited.	Vernacular is used in restricted manner.
The teachers as well as students use the mother tongue in explaining the sentences, meanings etc.	Neither the teacher nor the students use the mother tongue.	In the Bilingual Method it is the teacher who always makes use of the mother tongue to explain meanings and not the students.
Students are not given any practice in the drill of sentence patterns.	It lays more emphasis on pattern practice.	The learner is sufficiently subjected to sentence pattern drills.

*Contd.*

### *Objectives of the Bilingual Method*

The major objectives of the Bilingual Method are:

1. To make the learners of a second/foreign language fluent and accurate in the spoken word.
2. To make the learners accurate in the written word.
3. To prepare the learners in such a manner that he may be able to achieve through bilingualism.

### *Bilingual Method Principles*

The bilingual method follows certain principles as explained below.

- *Restricted use of the vernacular* Teaching-learning process is facilitated if only the mother tongue equivalents are given to the learner without duplicating the situation. So the vernacular is used at initial stage to explain the meaning of words.
- *Saves the time of the teacher* The use of the vernacular saves the time of the teacher from creating artificial situations.
- *More pattern practice* The advocates of the Bilingual Method believe that it is a waste of time to recreate the situation while teaching a foreign language, so time saved from creating situations can be used for giving more pattern practice to the students.
- *Only teacher speaks in vernacular* It is the teacher who uses the vernacular. Students only practice patterns of English.
- *Sentence as unit of speech* The unit of speech is a sentence and not word. Emphasis is laid on speaking full sentences.

### *Advantages and Disadvantages of the Bilingual Method*

*Advantages* Some of the advantages claimed for the Bilingual Method are as follows:—

1. The teacher is saved from the botheration of creating artificial situations in order to convey the meanings in English.
2. The time thus saved is utilized in giving pattern practice to the learner.
3. Even an average teacher of English can teach through this method without any elaborate preparation.
4. The Bilingual Method promotes both fluency and accuracy. It promotes theory as it lays emphasis on speech and pattern practice. It promotes accuracy as the meanings of new words are given in the mother tongue of the learner.
5. It does not require any teaching aids and is suited to all kinds of schools—rural and urban.
6. Unlike the Direct Method, which ignores the linguistic habits already acquired by the learner in the process of learning the first language, the Bilingual Method makes use of them.
7. Judicious use of mother tongue by the teacher does not spoil the environment of teaching English.
8. It helps in developing different linguistic skills i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.



**Disadvantages**

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  3. This method can confuse the students due to contrast between the features of two languages i.e., English and mother tongue.
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  5. The bad habit of learning everything by filtering through mother tongue may be formed.
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Contd.

<p>Students have less practice in Speaking English.</p> <p>It is not much improved method of teaching English.</p> <p>This method is less costly.</p> <p>It suits to both the average and below average students.</p> <p>It suits to majority of teachers.</p>	<p>Students have greater practice in speaking English.</p> <p>It is an improved method of teaching English.</p> <p>This method is very costly.</p> <p>It suits only brilliant students.</p> <p>It suits to the expert language teacher.</p>	<p>Students have greater practice in speaking English.</p> <p>It is an improved method of teaching English.</p> <p>This method is less costly.</p> <p>It suits to both the average and below average students.</p> <p>It suits to the average teacher.</p>
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## WHICH METHOD IS THE BEST?

The objective of language learning is to enable the learners to learn the target language and for this students should be actively involved in the learning process. So a good teacher is always in search of an effective method of teaching. The goals of language teaching can be obtained by selecting an appropriate method of teaching. After discussing the various methods of teaching English in India, it can be concluded that there is perhaps no single method which is workable in Indian classrooms. Why not go in for a rainbow effect in which the best of each method be incorporated depending upon the competence of the teacher. The thing that concerns us the most is the output. Methods are good or bad with reference to the output/outcomes of the linguistic abilities. The crux of the linguistic learning is that one is able to use it fluently, correctly and effectively as a matter of habit or, as master of course without any obvious stain on the thinking process. Every teacher of English should be able to achieve this target irrespective of the method implemented while teaching. So, it is advisable that the teacher should adopt eclectic and pragmatic approach because no single approach is useful in all the situations. The teacher should consider the following factors while making a choice of his method.

- Aims and objectives of language teaching
- Efficiency of the teacher
- Age and level of learning of students
- Class size
- Availability of instructional materials.
- Location of the institution i.e., urban or rural

## Conclusion

A good teacher is the judge of the methods; the best method is one that works well in the hands of the teacher because the right method in the hands of only right teachers can help in the attainment of goals. The methods are to serve us in our teaching process hence to be our servants and not our masters as "*the methods are meant are meant for us and not we for the methods.*"