Міністерство освіти і науки України

Закарпатський угорський інститут ім. Ференца Ракоці II

Кафедра філології

Реєстраційний №_____

Кваліфікаційна робота
Погляди майбутніх учителів іноземних мов на сучасні лінгводидактичні підходи
ЛЕВРІНЦ ЮРІЯ ЮРІЙОВИЧА

Студента 4-го курсу

Освітня програма: «Середня освіта (Мова і література (англійська))»

Спеціальність: 014 Середня освіта (Мова і література (англійська))

Рівень вищої освіти: бакалавр

Тема затверджена на засіданні кафедри
Протокол № 107 / 14.08.2024р.

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Робота захищена на оцінку _____ , ___ _____2025 _року

Протокол №___/ _____2025

Міністерство освіти і науки України

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Кваліфікаційна робота

ПОГЛЯДИ МАЙБУТНІХ УЧИТЕЛІВ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ НА СУЧАСНІ ЛІНГВОДИДАКТИЧНІ ПІДХОДИ

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Берегове

2025

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Qualifying paper

EFL STUDENT TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGE TEACHING

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2025

ЗМІСТ

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INTRODUCTION

EFL student teachers' beliefs are central to shaping their instructional practices and their openness to the principles of contemporary language teaching. They act as filters through which aspiring teachers construe theories, implementing them into practices, ultimately affecting the effectiveness of education reforms. In the context of Ukrainian reform, "The New Ukrainian School," which aims to innovate its schooling system, understanding such beliefs becomes crucial. Despite the endorsement of current language teaching by the above reform and its adoption in the curricula of teacher education programs, traditional methodologies tend to persist in classrooms. Consequently, exploring the beliefs of EFL student teachers can offer insights into the developmental trends of language education in our country, as well as factors affecting the adoption of modern approaches.

Extant literature demonstrates that teacher beliefs come under the influence of prior learning experiences, socio-cultural milieus, and initial teacher education (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Lőrincz, 2022). While traditional language teaching methods like grammar translation still endure and continue to affect teachers' instructional preferences (Tang et al., 2012), teacher education programs can refine these beliefs (Borg, 2011; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). Although several studies have looked into the relationship between language teachers' beliefs and teaching practices (Fives & Buehl, 2012; Lorincz, 2023), little attention has been paid to how these beliefs manifest in the context of reform movements. Moreover, EFL student teachers' beliefs about the interplay between traditional and contemporary teaching approaches are still underexplored, raising a number of questions: To what extent do EFL student teachers' beliefs align with the principles of contemporary language teaching? How do they conceive of traditional approaches, and why?

Thus, the thesis purports to investigate the beliefs of EFL student teachers about contemporary language teaching.

Accordingly, the object of this study is EFL student teachers' beliefs about language teaching, particularly their perceptions of contemporary and traditional approaches.

The subject of the thesis is student teachers' views of the aspects of language teaching, including instructional goals, procedures and techniques, interaction styles, teacher and learner roles, and their convergence or divergence with the principles of contemporary approaches.

The tasks of the study are as follows:

1. Analyze literature on the developments and recent trends in the field of language instruction;

2. Analyze available studies on EFL student teachers' beliefs about language teaching approaches and methods;

3. Identify the underlying principles of traditional and contemporary language teaching;

4. Administer a questionnaire to measure EFL student teachers' beliefs about language teaching approaches;

5. Evaluate the alignment of their beliefs with contemporary language teaching principles.

To this end, the study employs theoretical methods, including a review of the literature on teacher beliefs and contemporary EFL methodology. Additionally, a questionnaire-based survey is used to collect quantitative data about language teaching approaches with their subsequent statistical analysis.

Theoretical and practical value: the study contributes to the body of literature on prospective language teacher beliefs, which can inform the design of educational programs resonating with contemporary pedagogical objectives. It also offers a novel contribution by observing EFL student teachers' beliefs against the backdrop of Ukrainian educational reform.

The thesis first looks into the theoretical framework of the language-teaching field, tracing the development of language-teaching approaches and methods. Next, it moves on to the description of the empirical study on the prospective language teachers' beliefs about teaching approaches, presentation, and discussion of its principal findings.

PART I

LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACHES: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.1. The establishment of language teaching as an independent field

The field of language teaching prides itself on an eventful and extensively documented history, reflected in the numerous taxonomies attempting to classify trends and methods in language teaching (Curtis, 2017; Kelly, 1969; Nagy, 2019). A commonly referenced classification proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) outlines such methodologies as grammar-translation, direct method, reading method, audiolingualism, situational approach, cognitive approach, comprehension-based approach, affective-humanistic approach, and communicative approach. A noteworthy classification by Kumaradively (1994) identifies three categories, including language-centered methods (e.g., grammar-translation, audiolingualism), learner-centered methods (e.g., content-based instruction, communicative approach), and learning-centered methods (e.g., total physical response, the natural approach). Similarly, Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) divide approaches into two broad categories: those focusing on language use or analysis, with the former emphasizing communicative competence, and the letter – the study of grammar and rules. A recent trend in today's methodological discussions is the so-called post-communicative turn (Nagy, 2019).

Nevertheless, the history of language teaching goes far beyond these modern categorizations of approaches and methods discussed today. By examining how language teaching approaches have evolved, applied linguists have recognized discernable patterns and cycles of innovation in language pedagogy (Curtis, 2017). The accumulated historical observations contextualize present-day approaches. Moreover, they have led to the discovery of the enduring relevance of past practices, as mentioned by Kelly (1969) half a century ago. Thus, in his influential work, "Twenty-Five Centuries of Language Teaching," Kelly (ibid.) traces the development of language teaching from 500 b.c. to 1969. Based on the analysis of over a thousand sources, the scholar concluded that many contemporary methods were not entirely new. Most of them were reinterpretations or rebrandings of previous concepts and practices. Based on this observation, the author questioned the idea of methodological novelty and demonstrated the cyclical nature of innovation in language education.

Though a relative latecomer compared to classical Latin or Greek, teaching English as a foreign language has its documented beginnings around the fifteenth century (Curtis, 2017).

As Howatt (1984) notes in his seminal monograph "A History of English Language Teaching," EFL methods eventually rose to prominence, shaping the mainstream trends in language education. Despite its later start, EFL methodologies mirror the cumulative experience and knowledge base of the preceding epoch.

Around the 19th century, language teaching emerged as an independent academic field. This period was marked by the proliferation of specialized course books and methodological publications, leading to the establishment of language pedagogy as a formalized field. As the discipline matured, applied linguists endeavored to formulate systematic principles and procedures for designing language teaching methods and materials (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In contrast to previous traditions relying mainly on intuition, these efforts began to draw on the empirical evidence produced primarily by psychologists and linguists. Language pedagogy thus received theoretical support in developing assumingly more effective approaches to language instruction. As a result, the twentieth century saw rapid innovation and frequent shifts as language educators were striving to develop methods aligned with language acquisition research.

One of the features that defined twentieth-century language education was the proliferation of competing ideologies and the quest for effective methodologies (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Lorincz, 2023; 2025). Central to this period was the "method" concept, understood as a structured set of teaching practices grounded in a specific theory of language and language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 1). The search for a universal method became a major preoccupation in language education, grounded in the belief that each new approach could offer a more effective and theoretically robust basis for instruction than its predecessors.

The field of language education of the 20th century emerged largely against the backdrop of this interplay between evolving linguistic and psychological theories and instructional practices. Each new method, whether focused on the underlying language structure, communication, or learner-centeredness, ultimately reflected the objective of improving language learning outcomes. The commitment to theoretical rigor and innovation laid the foundation for contemporary EFL methodologies. Finally, the field of language teaching did not discard its historical foundations and instead synthesized the approaches and methods into what is commonly discussed as the "post-method" condition (Kumaradivelu, 1994; 2006).

1.2. Developments in the field of language education

The approaches and methods in language teaching have undergone notable transformations over the years. During the 19th century, language instruction continued the traditions of classical education and the so-called classical method applied in teaching Latin and Greek. Its ancestor, the grammar-translation method, became the first method gaining wide acceptance. It emphasized the systematic study of grammar rules and decontextualized vocabulary learning, primarily through the translation of texts in the original. Similarly to its predecessor, the grammar-translation method was viewed as an intellectual exercise rather than a tool leading to language acquisition. Language lessons focused on translating complicated pieces of literature, coupled with rote learning of grammar rules and vocabulary items. However, because it failed to produce speakers of a target language due to neglect of practical language use, it was replaced by the direct method (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

The direct method supplanted grammar-translation as a reaction to its failure to provide practice in oral communication. It advocated an immersive language learning environment, with the target language being taught directly without translation. Foreign languages were taught through natural language use and oral interactions. Written communication was largely overlooked for the sake of everyday language use. However, the implementation of the direct method required language teachers to be fluent speakers of the target language, which became one of the principal obstacles leading to its abandonment in comprehensive schools. To partly cover for the gaps in human resources, the field of language instruction saw the emergence of yet another method – the reading method, developed by Michael West. It did not ignore oral practice altogether, however, attaining speaking proficiency was considered an unrealistic goal. Instead, learners were expected to leave the course as efficient readers of target language texts with a dictionary.

By the middle of the century, influenced by the theories of structuralism in linguistics and behaviorism in psychology, the first theoretically-driven method – audiolingualism – made its appearance. It revolutionized language instruction by prioritizing oral skills over written competence. Nevertheless, oral production did not equal authentic communication. Spoken language was the foundation of language teaching, requiring that all classroom interactions occur exclusively in the target language. As a result, translation and explanations in the learners' first language were banned from the classroom. Nagy (2019) summarizes the key principles of the audio-lingual method as follows:

(a) the learners' first language is strictly avoided, with the target language being the primary means of classroom interactions;

(b) limited and carefully controlled vocabulary;

(c) language learning equals habit formation done through commands and actions;

(d) avoidance of explicit grammar instruction and grammar explanation; grammar is taught inductively through sequenced patterns;

(e) a sequenced approach to skills development, beginning with listening and speaking before moving on to reading and writing.

Among the frequently used techniques are drills and memorizing dialogues (p. 123). Although innovative at the time, audiolingualism faced criticism for over-reliance on meaningless repetition and lack of authentic communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The same criticism was expressed about the situational approach developed in Great Britain in parallel to audiolingualism.

With the development of the cognitive learning theory emphasizing mental processes and conscious analysis, the theory of behaviorism falls into disfavor. Language learners are no longer viewed as passive recipients of linguistic input but as creative constructors of hypotheses about language. In language education, this finds vent in the development of cognitive-code learning. Among its key principles are the following:

(a) language learning cannot be reduced to habit formation, constituting the process of acquiring rules;

(b) grammar is presented either deductively complemented with contextualized practice or inductively, where learners analyze examples and work out rules through guided discovery;

(c) vocabulary is also taught contextualized with an emphasis on its meaningful usage rather than memorization of isolated items;

(d) minimal reliance on the learners' native language, encouraging target language immersion.

Due to the neglect of the affective side of the learning process in the previous methods, the FLT field has witnessed the emergence of the affective-humanistic approach. It encompasses methods that emphasize the self-actualization of language learners, their emotional well-being, and social aspects of the learning process. The approach is also known as comprehension-based or designer method (Molina et al. 2006). The principal features of the affective-humanistic approach are as follows:

(a) emotional well-being is primary: the feelings of students and teachers are prioritized, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect;

(b) classroom atmosphere and relationships are more important than rigid adherence to specific methods or materials;

(c) pair work and small-group interactions are central to this approach, signaling a transition toward communicative language teaching (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014).

A group of designer methods include total physical response, community language learning, suggestopedia, and the silent way, among others. Developed by James Asher, the total physical response (TPR) integrates physical movement with language learning. Most of the teaching is done through spoken commands, so imperatives are primary language structures acquired by young learners. Being part of a comprehension-based approach, it prioritizes listening and understanding before speaking. Community language learning is rooted in Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology, hence the importance of a supportive classroom environment. Language teachers act as counselors, promoting group discussion in the target language, while learners are expected to construct language collaboratively. Suggestopedia was developed by a Bulgarian psychiatrist Georgi Lozanov. The method employs relaxation techniques, music, and hypnosis to create a stress-free learning environment. Learning is claimed to accelerate 25 times in comparison to more traditional teaching. The silent way, designed by Caleb Gattegno, has learner autonomy and discovery at its fore. Language teachers guide students with minimal interference and verbal input, encouraging them to discover knowledge and solve language-related problems independently.

1.3. Communicative Language Teaching

1.3.1. Preliminaries

Traditional language teaching, underlying all methodology of the latter half of the 20th century, was predominantly grounded in structuralism and behaviorism. As a result, language learning centered around explicit grammar instruction, analysis of structures, and rote memorization. Instruction was reduced to the mastery of discrete grammatical structures and vocabulary organized into four language skills: speaking and writing (active skills) and listening and reading (passive skills) (Savignon, 1991). Language lessons emphasized accuracy with minimal tolerance for language errors, while the role of meaningful interaction in the target language was downplayed. The precision in reproducing linguistically correct patterns was the ultimate goal of language education. Consequently, traditional language teaching often leaves learners ill-equipped for real-life communication. Students who experienced traditional approaches found themselves unable to apply their knowledge about language in authentic

communicative contexts since such theoretical knowledge does not translate into practical skills.

The traditional view of language learning as an intellectual exercise underwent significant criticism. Thus, Chomsky (1965) challenged the assumption that language learning could be understood as a mechanical process, ignoring the complexities of real-world communication. In particular, Hymes (1971) introduced the concept of communicative competence, explaining that effective language use involves not only knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, but also an understanding of when, how, and to whom to communicate.

Communicative competence refers to the ability to understand and perform socially appropriate behaviors in various communicative contexts, emphasizing the active use of the target language (Brandl, 2021). The notion encompasses several components: (a) linguistic competence includes knowledge of grammar and vocabulary; (b) sociolinguistic competence pertains to the ability to use language appropriately depending on social situation; (c) discourse competence concerns the ability to start, sustain, and conclude conversations, maintaining coherence and cohesion; (d) strategic competence relates to the ability to manage communication difficulties and breakdowns.

Coupled with the reconceptualization of language as a tool for social interaction, socio-political changes of the 1960-1970s, and the global rise of English, language teaching experienced a significant shift. Language educators moved their priorities from teaching language as an abstract system to learners' interaction in real-life contexts (Nunan, 1989). All these provided an impetus to the development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which placed meaningful communication at the forefront of language instruction.

The classical or stronger version of CLT (1990s-1990s) was a departure from traditional approaches such as grammar-translation, audiolingualism, or situational approach, which fell into disfavor under the influence of new insights gained from research. The dominance of grammar and accuracy as the cornerstone of language instruction began to be questioned. Applied linguists argued that effective communication was more than grammatical accuracy. In addition to fluency, the third component of language competence – appropriacy – was introduced, i.e., the ability to use language appropriately in various social and contextual settings (Richards, 2005).

Though grammatical competence, enabling the production of accurate sentences, forms part of it, communicative competence is a much broader notion requiring the skills of making promises, requests, apologizing, providing explanations, expressing wishes, and others. Rooted in sociolinguistics, the given concepts drew attention to the importance of understanding how to adapt language to interlocutors, roles, intentions, and social milieus. Traditional language

teaching overlooked these aspects of communication on the assumption that they can be acquired implicitly. Unlike previous traditions, CLT addressed this gap by promoting authentic interaction in the lesson. Consequently, CLT classrooms started to incorporate role-plays, discussions, and problem-solving tasks to stimulate genuine communication.

Reconsideration of the role of grammar and the emphasis on the functional use of language led educators to design courses underscoring learners' communicative needs. According to van Ek and Alexander (1980), a communicative syllabus comprises the following aspects:

a) learner objectives: a language course begins with identifying specific purposes for language learning, e.g., academic, professional, or travel-related goals;

b) settings: identifying the environments in which learners intend to use the target language, e.g., workplace, social events, or academic institutions;

c) social roles: understanding the roles learners and their interlocutors would likely assume;

d) communicative events: understanding the range of situations learners may encounter, like casual conversations or professional discourse;

e) language functions: developing skills to perform tasks like introducing oneself or providing explanations;

f) notions: covering topics learners would likely need to discuss, such as health issues or politics;

g) discourse skills: teaching learners how to structure communication, e.g., provide arguments, relate a story;

h) language varieties: raising learners' awareness of features of language varieties and dialects;

i) grammar: there is a place for grammar, but its role is not central;

j) vocabulary: focusing on relevant vocabulary for learners' needs (Richards, 2005).

The widespread acceptance of CLT is attributable to its methodological innovations for one thing. In addition, its principles were promptly incorporated by practical language course book authors. British publishers mass-produced language learning materials based on CLT, gaining international traction. Partly owing to this, the approach grew into one of the most influential in modern language education. As stated by Richards & Rodgers (2001), CLT, sometimes termed the notional-functional or functional approach, rapidly turned into a global movement taken up by language educators and even policymakers (pp. 154-155).

1.3.2. Features of CLT

CLT is seen as an approach rather than a method. Today, it came to mean no more than loosely connected principles aiming to develop learners' communicative competence (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Among its two principal objectives is the development of communicative competence and teaching strategies for the four language skills, while emphasizing the interconnectedness of language and communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Due to this broad scope and wide interpretability, CLT gained wide acceptance and became remarkably endurable (Lőrincz, 2025). CLT lacks a single recognized model or even a definitive textbook. In some cases, it represents a combination of functional and grammatical teaching. Even in the 1980s, some scholars viewed CLT as comprising systematic attention to functional and structural aspects of language (Littlewood, 1981). Conversely, CLT involves activities where learners work collaboratively to tackle problem-solving tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). According to Widdowson (1990), CLT enabled learners to perform communicative acts, express concepts, and use language functionally.

A distinction is drawn between classic CLT (the 1970s-1990s) or current CLT (Richards, 2005) or its strong and weak versions:

"There is, in a sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The weak version, which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching. . . . The 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it." (Howatt, 1984, p. 279).

Having evolved from overconcentration on mere oral interactions, it now came to denote a set of broad assumptions that can comfortably incorporate features of a variety of methods (Lőrincz, 2025). These features may vary and easily adapt to the educational settings, learners' psychological characteristics, and their objectives for learning a language. Contemporary CLT is best seen as an adaptable approach, shaped by the context of its application and localized perspectives.

The underlying principles of CLT were summarized in the literature (Celce-Murcia, 2014; Nagy, 2019; Richards, 2005) as follows:

1. Developing communicative competence is the primary goal of language instruction;

2. Personalizing learning makes learning more engaging and relatable;

3. Initial imitation gradually transforms into spontaneous language use by this enhancing language acquisition;

4. Instruction centers around all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) through content- and task-based activities;

5. Meaning-making takes precedence over accuracy; appropriateness of language use is crucial;

6. Teaching grammar is assigned a subsidiary role;

7. Participation, affective engagement, and collaboration stimulate learning; various techniques like role-plays, games, and debates encourage learners to use language authentically;

8. Teachers facilitate language learning, acting as guides in communication.

Contemporary CLT continues to rely on some of the practices of its earlier classical version, at the same time incorporating the strong points of more traditional approaches. Typically, a contemporary language classroom may include the following features, as summarized in Richards (2005):

1. Integrated grammar and communication: grammar is taught in context and not in isolation. It may emerge naturally from communicative tasks that require the use of specific structures;

2. Interactive communicative activities: problem-solving tasks, information-sharing tasks, and role-plays stimulate communication and sharing of meaning;

3. Deductive and deductive grammar presentation: lesson procedures include both deductive or rule-focused and inductive or discovery-based grammar learning experiences;

4. Relevance to students' experiences: content is selected that resonates with learners' experiences and interests;

5. Authentic materials: classroom materials commonly include authentic content to provide exposure to real-life contexts of communication.

Since its inception, CLT has been rethought, marking shifts in paradigm and paving the way to new directions in language teaching. Jacobs and Farrel (2003) summarize eight such

shifts feeding into more recent methodological developments, like task-based language teaching or content-based instruction:

(a) Modern language teaching empowers learners to take greater control over their development by fostering learner autonomy. It may include allowing them to decide what and how they wish to learn. At the same time, learners are encouraged to take greater responsibility for the learning process.

(b)Learning is viewed as a socially interactive process rather than a solitary activity. The sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and based on it cooperative language learning, underscores collaboration and interaction as supportive mechanisms of language acquisition.

(c) The content of language courses is integrated with the content of other disciplines. For instance, text-based instruction, content-based instruction, or project-based learning require students to use their language skills across different disciplines.

(d) The foundation of language learning is meaningful communication. This finds reflection in content-based instruction, where content is the core component of language activities.

(e) All students are individuals with varied learning styles and strengths. Language teaching, therefore, should adapt to these diverse learner needs to promote language acquisition.

(f) Language learning should stimulate critical and creative thinking since language serves more functions than communication. Language lessons, thus, should be devoted to problem-solving and creative tasks.

(g) Traditional assessment gives way to more comprehensive evaluation techniques, including lesson observation, portfolio, journals, or interviews.

(h) A shift to learner-centeredness has changed the role of teachers to that of facilitators and co-learners. This approach stimulates teachers to engage in ongoing professional development.

Nevertheless, these shifts in perspectives did not culminate in the creation of a universal version of CLT that can be adapted to different educational contexts, nor abandoned CLT. Instead, several related methodologies viewed by some as extensions of CLT have been developed (e.g., task-based language teaching, content-based instruction, cooperative learning, sheltered instruction) in response to diverse educational settings, needs, or goals pointing to the flexibility of CLT principles.

1.4. Recent methodological developments

Building on the premises of CLT, the late 20th and early 21st centuries saw the emergence of student- and learning-centered methodologies. Seen as extensions to CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), the related methodologies like content and language-integrated learning, task-based language teaching, and others gained acceptance in multiple national and educational settings. In parallel, the term post-communicative language teaching has started to be used by some scholars as supplanting CLT (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al., 2014).

1.4.1. Content-based instruction

One of its extensions, content-based instruction, combines learning language and subject matter (e.g., geography or history) instead of following a traditional linguistic syllabus. It permits learners to acquire content knowledge and language-related competencies simultaneously. In Europe, an approach functioning under similar premises is termed content and language-integrated learning. The success of their implementation largely depends on the collaboration between content teachers and language teachers. Both approaches came into existence as a reflection of lingual globalization and the trend of using English as an instructional medium.

The premises of content-based instruction or content and language-integrated learning that distinguish them from traditional language teaching were summarized by Richards and Rodgers (2014). The approaches operate on the assumption that language learning is more effective if language serves to acquire information and not for its own sake. Additionally, they align closer with students' needs, making language learning more purposeful and connected to their individual or educational objectives. Moreover, these approaches provide a unified basis for developing all aspects of linguistic competence (Richards, 2005).

A number of models have been developed to integrate language learning with the acquisition of subject-specific content (Curtis, 2017; Brinton et al., 1989). The first of these, sheltered content instruction, involves content specialists teaching their respective subjects in the target language to a group of non-native language learners separated from their native-speaker peers. It is believed to be more effective because an adapted environment reduces cognitive and linguistic pressures typically experienced by language learners in a native-speaker educational context.

Immersion programs originated in the Canadian experiments carried out in the 1960s-1970ies where native English speakers were learning French as a second language. In this

model, various subjects are delivered entirely in the target language. However, even though some students were effective in attaining high degrees of proficiency in both language and content material, others struggled to access content due to underdeveloped linguistic skills. This model was later used as a basis for content and language-integrated learning. It positions itself even closer to the "content" end of the language-content continuum than content-based instruction (Curtis, 2017; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The "adjunct model" based on content-based instruction runs two courses parallelly. One of the courses is devoted to language instruction, while the other covers subject-specific content. The two courses are coordinated to ensure quality learning in both areas. By far the most common are the theme-based and topic-based models. Instruction revolves around broad topics (e.g., health care, food industry, information technologies), which serve to develop language competencies. They are widely used in English for Specific Purposes courses. Their popularity is accounted for by the focus on relevant content and learners' needs. English for Academic Purposes primarily aims to equip students wishing to enroll in educational programs with an appropriate level of language proficiency. Their popularity is fast growing due to the increasing number of international students in English-speaking countries.

Notwithstanding its immense popularity and numerous benefits in terms of learning gains, content-based instruction raises some concerns about its practicality and academic outcomes (Curtis, 2017; Richards, 2005). One of the issues concerns the development of language proficiency as a by-product of subject-specific content. In many cases where a second or foreign language is used as an instructional medium for school subjects, students overlook the aims of developing language skills for the sake of content. Consequently, many end up with underdeveloped language competence and gaps in knowledge of the target language.

Another common concern has been expressed concerning the necessary subject-matter knowledge language teachers should have to teach. In case language teachers fail to gain expertise in the content area, there are high risks of oversimplification of the subject matter. By the end of such courses, students may not acquire the expected disciplinary knowledge. To teach both language skills and subject matter effectively requires additional training or collaboration between teachers of the respective field and language teachers, which is not always feasible.

Last but not least, it is not easy to organize an assessment of learning outcomes. Teachers may find themselves pondering whether learners should be primarily assessed based on their knowledge of content, language competence, or both. Supposing both are marked, how should the two be weighted, or what criteria should be applied to ensure objectivity? Even so, despite the above limitations, content-based instruction has not diminished in its appeal.

Moreover, courses following its premises have mushroomed over the last years to the degree that amazes even its staunchest proponents (Maljers et al., 2007).

1.4.2. Task-based instruction

Task-based instruction or task-based language teaching has tasks as the primary instructional units. It represents a language teaching approach where meaningful activities, reflecting real-world language use, are completed by students. It shifts away from traditional language teaching and overreliance on grammar by emphasizing the development of language proficiency as a natural outcome of engaging in authentic, purpose-driven tasks. Task-based instruction is viewed as an approach to language teaching rather than a method because it does not prescribe classroom procedures and can be interpreted in varied ways to suit classroom contexts. Task-based instruction proceeds from the assumption that language acquisition is facilitated by interactive processes. Its advocates argue that language proficiency, including linguistic competence (e.g., grammatical accuracy, vocabulary), is a by-product of students' active involvement in task completion rather than explicit instruction of language aspects (Prabhu, 1990).

To complete a task, students are encouraged to draw on their current language abilities. Tasks are organized for students to focus on meaning-making, comprehending, and conveying messages instead of directly learning about or perfecting grammatical forms. Tasks are designed with a reason and outcome in mind, found in real-life situations, and not with an explicit linguistic goal. Due to this, tasks gain relevance for students, thus motivating them to engage fully. Furthermore, students are supposed to complete tasks collaboratively, which enhances interaction in the target language. Hence, the principal characteristics of the given approach are focus on meaning rather than form, reliance on students' current language abilities, tangible outcomes of task completion, and interactive engagement (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Task-based instruction has been widely researched, uncovering its numerous benefits. The approach appeals to both teachers and learners as it fosters motivation and interest among students who find them personally relevant and enjoyable. Being exposed to real-world tasks, learners encounter diverse lexical items and structures, which deepens their knowledge of language. Among its key strengths is student-centeredness since lessons are tailored with student needs in mind, learner autonomy, and personalized learning. Similarly, the authenticity of tasks helps students develop communication skills, normally activated for authentic interactions outside the classroom. In all, task-based instruction is effective in various

educational, institutional, and national settings. Numerous studies consistently showcase that it leads to increased motivation, higher levels of language proficiency, and student satisfaction with the courses.

Despite its undeniable benefits, task-based instruction is not a universal solution to problems arising in language classrooms. Developing suitable materials and tasks requires significant teacher effort and expertise. It is exacerbated by the limited commercially available textbooks developed for courses wishing to implement this approach. Designing context-sensitive tasks and aligning them with students' objectives is complex and time-consuming. As Calvert and Sheen (2015) point out, "The creation, implementation, and evaluation of language learning tasks remain a challenge for many teachers, especially those with limited experience with using tasks in their teaching." (p. 226). Even learners accustomed to more traditional language teaching focusing on grammar may find them very comfortable and question the value of courses based solely on tasks. Also, there are issues with the assessment of task performance. Teachers may struggle to prioritize language use versus task completion in evaluations.

Even so, one of the key strengths of task-based instruction is its flexibility. As it is not a prescribed off-the-shelf method, it can be easily adapted to other approaches. While task-based instruction may not be ideal for courses dependent on standardized testing, it is appealing due to its student-centeredness and focus on authentic interactions in the target language.

1.4.3. Competency-based language teaching

Competency-based instruction made its appearance around the 1970s as a systematic approach to course planning and delivery. It is widely utilized in programs for adult language learners, especially those relevant to survival-oriented communication and workplace readiness. It sees its primary objective in preparing adult language learners to communicate in specific professional or social milieus. It enjoys wide acceptance worldwide, especially in vocational and technical education, and has become part of national curricula in numerous countries (Boukhentache, 2020; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Richards, 2005).

Competency-based language teaching focuses on practice and learning outcomes and is less concerned with abstract linguistic knowledge. In the context of this approach, competency denotes an ability to perform a specific task or function in a given context. The tasks are often described as functions of work that require specific skills and knowledge in real-world settings. Such competencies designate learning outcomes of instructional modules, while tasks define what learners must accomplish to demonstrate mastery (Griffith & Lim, 2014).

The defining characteristics of competencies described by Griffith & Lim (2014) include the following:

1. Competencies are designed to prepare learners for the situations they are likely to encounter in professional or social settings, e.g., giving instructions, providing medical history, and filling out an application. They require practical skills and, to a lesser degree, theoretical understanding.

2. Each competency is supplied with clear, measurable criteria that allow learners to assess their progress or notice areas for improvement. Performance is evaluated based on respective rubrics.

3. To ensure relevance, competencies are formulated by considering learners' needs and context.

Competency-based language teaching steers away from a traditional, knowledge-based paradigm to a student-centered, skills-focused approach. It emphasizes the ability to complete real-world tasks in the target language while de-emphasizing grammatical accuracy. Effective task completion and rote memorization or abstract knowledge are benchmarks for success. It assumes that while knowledge of grammar rules may make task completion easier, it is insufficient. Such knowledge should be used to accomplish designated tasks.

This approach resembles English for specific purposes or task-based approaches by focusing on learners' language needs. Course design normally begins by analyzing tasks students are likely to perform depending on the context and the language competencies necessary to complete such tasks. For example, a job training course might include competencies like undergoing a job interview, completing applications, and following workplace safety instructions (Richards, 2005). Lessons are structured in a way that allows them to develop these competencies.

Despite its numerous advantages, some critical points have been leveled at the approach. For instance, breaking down tasks into discrete competencies may lead to oversimplified language learning where critical thinking and other cognitive skills remain underrepresented. Identifying competencies and basing tasks on them is often done intuitively, thus making the whole of the instruction less systematic than it may appear initially. Moreover, since the approach focuses on discrete behaviors, the holistic nature of language acquisition may not be addressed. Finally, it may not fully prepare learners for more standardized testing formats owing to its overly individualized, highly context-sensitive learning objectives.

1.5. Understanding postmethod condition

Around the 1970s, after many unsuccessful attempts to come up with a universal method, language educators realized that such a method probably never existed and never would become a reality. This realization was prompted, for one thing, by the observation that some learners appeared to thrive regardless of the experienced methods or techniques. Fatigued by the obsession with fashionable methods and the incessant search for the best alternative has ushered in post-method thinking (Kumaradivelu, 1994; 2006). As Arikan (2006) explains, "Postmethod condition refers to the qualities of the contemporary era in English language teaching in which previously well-trusted methods are put under serious scrutiny and in which a body of methods and techniques collected from all previous methods and approaches are used pragmatically with a belief that such an eclectic practice leads to success" (p. 1).

According to Kumaradivelu (2006), the postmethod condition, with its shift from the idea of the "best method" towards the selection of strategies adaptable to teaching contexts, relies on three core principles:

(a) particularity: language instruction is designed with unique characteristics of the context in mind like learners, teachers, and sociocultural environment;

(b) practicality: teachers should have the autonomy to design classroom practices founded on their experiential knowledge and reflection;

(c) possibility: language teaching should address social and cultural dimensions, empowering learners to use language for societal participation and critical thinking.

The postmethod condition eschews debates about which method is superior or inferior and instead concerns itself with selecting effective strategies relevant to any given educational context. Accordingly, language teachers are dissuaded from adhering rigidly to a single method and instead develop or select teaching techniques to enhance learning outcomes. Its primary goal is seen in adaptive and innovative teaching practices that can best meet the needs of students and learning environments.

Apart from the post-method condition, this new era in language education has received several competing titles, including "enlightened eclecticism," "principled eclecticism," (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011), or "post-communicative turn" (Ur, 2014; Nagy, 2019). Eclecticism gained prominence in the late 20th century driven by similar sentiments coupled with the recognition of the limitations of adhering to a single method. In his seminal paper, "There is no best method – Why?", Prabhu (1990) rejected the idea of a universally applicable method for teaching languages, explaining that teachers should strive to use a variety of methods or some of their features within the same context depending on immediate needs

and learning objectives. Thus, eclecticism is best understood as drawing on techniques and strategies from multiple methods to create a context-sensitive approach within an educational setting.

The resurgence of eclecticism in the 2000s was a notable shift from the earlier preference for the term post-method. Larsen-Freeman (2000) introduced the concept of principled eclecticism describing it as a coherent and pluralistic approach to language teaching where diverse activities are tailored to meet learners' needs. Thus, principled eclecticism advocates for the thoughtful choice of techniques based on their effectiveness and relevance to a teaching setting. As opposed to random eclecticism, principled eclecticism is an informed coherent approach whereby methods are selected purposefully to align with pedagogical goals.

Nevertheless, despite its flexibility, critics caution against the potential pitfalls of eclecticism. Unsystematic selection of methods can result in disorganized teaching practices. Moreover, Cehan (2014) cautions against uncritical eclecticism which can end up in an inconsistent methodology applied by inadequately educated language teachers with gaps in pedagogical content knowledge (Levrints/Lorincz, 2022). Therefore, the success of its implementation depends on teachers' skills to critically evaluate and adapt methods to support learners' progress.

A closely related term, the post-communicative approach, represents yet another development in methodological thinking. It builds on the strengths of communicative language teaching while addressing its limitations (Ur, 2014). The post-communicative approach does not replace CLT but incorporates many of its numerous assets. Nagy (2019) views it as "an improvement of CLT with localized materials and techniques" (p. 137). Additionally, it expands the focus of CLT by integrating elements from other methodologies.

The core features of the post-communicative paradigm include (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014; Nagy, 2019):

(a)   task-based learning: activities simulate real-world tasks providing opportunities for the practical use of language in authentic contexts;

(b)   reintegration of grammar: while classical CLT disregarded explicit grammar instruction, the post-communicative approach acknowledges its importance in a way that supports communicative competence;

(c)   first language use: translation and first-language use see a comeback as valuable tools facilitating understanding;

(d)   focus on lexis: vocabulary teaching is given greater prominence as CLT placed excessive stress on appropriacy at the expense of lexical knowledge;

(e)   reintegration of previous techniques: effective techniques from earlier approaches and methods are combined to create a more balanced teaching approach that considers learners' linguistic, cognitive, and cultural needs.

As seen, many principles of the post-communicative approach do not run counter to CLT seeking to address its deficiencies. Thus, grammar and vocabulary are revisited emphasizing both deductive and inductive teaching. Honored classroom activities at present include task-based activities, collaborative work, and even translation exercises. Traditional techniques like repetition and drilling are also being rehabilitated.

Even so, the post-communicative approach and other related concepts have also been criticized. Thus, Lőrincz (2022; 2025) argues that this new approach places teachers under an additional burden, requiring more extensive professional preparation, deeper knowledge, reflection, and flexibility. Without robust teacher education, there are risks of practitioners resorting to an unsystematic "my-own method" style of teaching. One of its critics, Bell (2007) views the post-method condition as less of a paradigm shift and more of an integration of earlier methods under the CLT umbrella term. Furthermore, the shift away from established methods raises concerns about the lack of clear guidelines and problems with standardization. Some language teachers and institutions find it challenging having to select an adequate approach from an array of possibilities stipulated by the postmethod condition raising fears that language teaching might turn unsystematic.

Despite its gaps, contemporary language teaching represents a significant step forward in language education. While it does not altogether discard earlier approaches and methods, it draws on their strengths to meet present-day educational demands. As Kumaradivelu (1994) points out, the post-method condition does not equal an absence of methods but rather a departure from reliance on a singular methodological framework or procedure. By combining elements of past methodologies with recent developments, current language teaching offers a more context-sensitive approach to language instruction.

PART II
EFL STUDENT TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1. Method

Beliefs held by aspiring EFL teachers are foundational to their pedagogical practices affecting their conceptualization, evaluation, and implementation of contemporary language teaching approaches (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Beliefs reflect what teachers "know, believe, and think" (Borg, 2003, p. 81), which at times appear to be contradictory. Beliefs are shaped by an array of factors like prior learning experiences, cultural influences, and knowledge acquired during initial teacher education (Borg, 2003). Far from being static, beliefs evolve while student teachers construct the relevant course content, undergo teaching practicum, and engage in reflective practices. Pajares (1992) likened beliefs to filters influencing teachers' perceptions of educational settings, which ultimately determine instructional decision-making. In the context of contemporary language teaching (CLT) and the Ukrainian reform movement "New Ukrainian School," disclosing the nature of these beliefs is critical to the implementation of the stipulated innovations into classroom practices. Therefore, this study aims to explore prospective language teachers' beliefs about contemporary language teaching.

It has been observed in the literature that student teachers' beliefs heavily depend on their own language learning experiences. Aspiring teachers form implicit beliefs about effective teaching long before entering teacher education programs (Lortie, 1975). Such early, prematurely formed impressions are prone to align with traditional approaches like grammar-translation and teacher-centered methodologies. Even after years spent in the university and exposure to current approaches, students persist in applying conventional approaches and are impervious to aligning their practices with more current principles (Tang et al., 2012). Even high-achieving students, knowledgeable in the theoretical foundations of contemporary EFL teaching, are no exception and endorse grammar-focused traditional approaches (Lőrincz, 2023).

Nevertheless, the notion of rigidity in pre-existing beliefs among student teachers has been questioned in several publications, in which teacher education programs played a pivotal role in refining or even redefining students' beliefs (Gatbonton, 2008). Thus, Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) view belief development as an ongoing process of negotiation between personal and professional growth. The researchers categorized the processes through which beliefs evolved and emphasized that exposure to new theories and experiences could modify initial

beliefs held by language teachers or their reinforcement. However, belief transformation in teacher education is non-linear and may be preconditioned by personal reflections or teaching experiences.

Field experiences, comprising observation and teaching practicum, were also shown to shape student teachers' beliefs. Debreli (2012) reported that practical experience, combined with a methods course, was a pivotal moment that allowed prospective teachers to critically reflect on the feasibility of their acquired knowledge in real classroom settings. Teaching practicum offers an invaluable opportunity for student teachers to test their beliefs by experimenting with contemporary approaches (Lőrincz, 2023; 2025). However, its effectiveness is contingent on the quality of mentoring and the alignment between practicum contexts and the principles of instruction espoused by teacher education programs (Zeichner, 2017).

In addition, the incorporation of reflective practices, such as maintaining teaching journals, action research, participating in case study analyses, and peer discussion, have been identified as tools for raising teachers' awareness of beliefs (Borg, 2011; Farrell, 2018). Farrell and Ives (2014) found that reflecting on and articulating their beliefs helped language teachers develop awareness of the meaning and influence of beliefs on their instructional practices. Consequently, engagement in reflective practices may lead to teachers' deeper understanding of how these beliefs align or diverge from modern principles of language education (Farrell, 2018).

In this respect, Farrell (2019) notes that many novice teachers find a significant gap between the content delivered by their programs and the exigencies of the classroom, mirroring a mismatch between their initial beliefs and realities. Language teacher education programs should therefore strive to help students critically evaluate their implicit beliefs by fostering reflective practices. By making a case for reflection, Farrell (2019) argues that it can help language teachers make informed, context-sensitive decisions about their teaching. The author concludes that language teachers grow and develop by regularly examining and evaluating their teaching approaches, which help them become more effective (Farrell, 2018).

In all, the existing literature showcases EFL student teachers' beliefs as crucial in shaping their teaching practices and their openness to contemporary approaches in language education. Even so, while much attention has been given to theorizing on the development of beliefs, less is known about how EFL student teachers' beliefs manifest during initial teacher education in the context of educational reform movements, such as the "New Ukrainian School." With this gap in mind, this study aims to look into the beliefs held by Ukrainian EFL

student teachers about contemporary language teaching approaches. Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research question:

What are the prevailing beliefs of EFL student teachers about contemporary and traditional language teaching approaches?

2.2. Participants

The study involved 64 undergraduate students enrolled in the English Language and Literature teacher education program in a higher education institution in Ukraine. Their participation was voluntary and anonymous. The participants were completing the fourth year of the bachelor program, which was their final year of study. Forty-five were full-time students, while the remaining nineteen attended a correspondent course. All participants had undergone an extensive teaching practicum lasting six weeks in the current year. The students' exposure to school practicum, together with an eight-credit course in methodology, positioned them as eligible candidates for exploring beliefs about language teaching approaches.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

The study utilized a questionnaire developed by Lőrincz (2023) to explore EFL student teachers' beliefs about language teaching approaches. In particular, it looked into preferences across traditional language teaching (TLT) and contemporary language teaching (CLT). The instrument comprises several thematic sections addressing principles of traditional and recent teaching principles:

(a)   Instructional orientation and language focus: the TLT section emphasizes accuracy, explicit instruction of the language structure, and error-free production. The CLT part prioritizes meaningful communication, fluency, and contextualized grammar and vocabulary instruction.

TLT discounts fluency in speaking as unattainable in an EFL setting and views reading comprehension with the help of a dictionary as more realistic. In contrast, CLT aspires to fluency and functional competence in the target language.

(b) Procedures and techniques: the instrument contrasts traditional language teaching techniques, like translation, drills, and textbook-centered learning, with communicative activities, real-world tasks, role-plays, and authentic materials.

(c) Interaction: CLT recognizes the advantages of collaborative interaction among students and incorporates pair and group work, while in TLT these forms of student work are believed to be less effective than teacher-led activities.

(d) Language use: TLT heavily relies on students' first language, and it does not serve as the principal means of classroom interactions, while CLT stresses the target language for classroom communication for teachers and learners alike.

(e) Teacher-centeredness vs. learners-centeredness: TLT advocates a teacher-led instructional environment with teachers being the principal source of knowledge and decision-makers in selecting learning content and activities. Conversely, CLT promotes learner autonomy, where teachers facilitate learning by considering learners' needs and interests.

(f) Approaches and methods: the instrument also evaluates views regarding various teaching approaches and methods, including grammar-translation, audiolingualism, reading method, task-based learning, content-based instruction, cooperative learning, and others.

The instrument collected quantitative data on a 5-point Likert scale. The choice fell on this questionnaire as it aligns with the study's research objective to examine prospective language teachers' beliefs about the expediency of language teaching methodologies. The data were collected via an online questionnaire and analyzed utilizing the SPSS statistical package.

2.4. Results

Table 1 sets out the data on student teachers' beliefs about the ultimate goals of language instruction and classroom orientation.

Table 1: *Beliefs about goals and language focus*

Orientation and language focus	M	SD
Goals **TLT** Becoming a fluent speaker of English is an unrealistic goal in the EFL context.	2.29	1.03
A realistic goal of language teaching is the ability to read and understand texts with a dictionary.	2.84	1.28
CLT Becoming a fluent speaker of English is the ultimate goal of language teaching.	4.13	.89

	M	SD
TLT ***Focus on forms and accuracy*** Knowing the rules of grammar is necessary for effective communication. They help learners to talk to native speakers.	3.52	1.05
Explicit grammar teaching (teaching rules, doing grammar exercises) should occur in almost every lesson.	3.28	1.01
Accurate use of language is the principal criterion of language knowledge.	3.89	.91
The teacher should present words and grammar structures in isolation so that learners understand their meaning and usage.	3.78	.92
The teacher should emphasize correct language production (students speak and write correctly).	4.25	.82
Over-emphasizing communication in the lessons leads to students' inability to speak correctly.	3.06	1.08
One has truly mastered a language only if they speak without errors.	3.2	1.21
CLT ***Focus on fluency and meaning*** The teacher should focus on developing students' ability to engage in real-life communication in English.	4.47	.84
Grammar structures and words are best taught in the meaningful context.	4.09	.79
Knowledge of grammar rules is not enough for effective communication. It is possible to speak fluently without knowing the rules.	3.72	1.13
Some grammar structures can be taught implicitly (without rules).	3.64	1.11
The primary focus of the lesson should be meaningful language use, with some attention given to the form (grammar, words).	3.84	.84
The ability to communicate ideas effectively and appropriately for the context is more important than producing grammatically correct sentences.	3.72	.83
Students should be taught to do things with language, i.e., apologize, promise, invite, agree or disagree.	4.44	.83

M=mean

SD=standard deviation

The participants' beliefs about the goals of language teaching revealed a definitive preference for fluency in English (M=4.13) in line with the principles of CLT. Conversely, the students rejected the idea that fluency was an unrealistic goal rating it much lower (M=2.29). With regard to language focus, the participants moderately endorsed traditional views with an emphasis on accuracy and explicit grammar teaching. The highest-rated statement in this category concerned correct language production (M=4.25), thus prioritizing accurate language use. However, the beliefs that explicit grammar teaching should occur in every lesson (M=3.28) or that language mastery equals accuracy (M=3.2) showed only moderate support. Students

were also partly skeptical about the notion that overemphasizing communication may result in learners' low accuracy (M=3.06). The principles underscoring fluency and meaningful communication underlying CLT received the highest overall ratings. Of these, developing skills of engaging in authentic communication (M=4.47), teaching language functions (M=4.44), and contextualized grammar teaching (M=4.09) had the highest mean scores. Students also moderately supported the idea that some structures can be taught implicitly (M=3.64) and that knowing grammar is insufficient for effective communication (S=3.72).

Hence, the data suggest a clear preference for CLT over TLT. Although the participants recognize the significance of accuracy and explicit instruction, their beliefs strongly align with real-world communication. Overall, they favor a balanced approach with an inclination toward CLT principles.

Table 2 displays the findings of the study of student teachers' beliefs about classroom procedures and techniques.

Table 2: *Beliefs about classroom procedures*

Classroom procedures	*M*	*SD*
TLT Translation should be a central part of the lesson.	3.56	.83
The teacher should strive to cover all material and exercises included in a textbook.	2.97	1.01
Analysis of syntactic structures is indispensable for effective learning and should be regularly used in the lessons.	3.16	.88
Memorization of dialogues and texts is essential in language teaching.	2.98	.99
Tasks teaching the correct use of language should prevail in the lessons.	3.83	.88
Drills (e.g., exercises in which learners repeat sentence patterns, changing them slightly) are extremely effective in language teaching.	3.88	.88
CLT The teacher should use activities that resemble real-world tasks.	4.22	.92
Activities simulating real-life communication should prevail in the lessons.	4.23	.95
The teacher should supply learners with additional materials apart from course books based on students' individual needs.	4.27	.78
Using games and role-plays simulating real-life communication is essential for language learning.	4.39	.83
The teacher should use authentic materials (e.g., magazine or newspaper articles, advertisements, travel brochures, menus) in teaching English.	3.78	1.13

M=mean

SD=standard deviation

Similar to the previous category, the participants' beliefs about instructional procedures indicate a clear preference for CLT, especially communicative approach and task-based instruction. Thus, using activities like games and role-plays stimulating authentic communication (M=4.39) and real-world tasks (M=4.22) scored the highest. Students are also convinced that activities encouraging authentic communication should prevail in the lessons (M=4.23). At the same time, a significant part of the respondents support the belief that lessons should mainly include activities teaching accurate language use (M=3.83). Translation (M=3.56), drills (M=3.88), and analysis of structures (M=3.16) were also moderately supported. Hence, traditional teaching practices are not unanimously favored.

The results on group interaction perceptions (Table 3) demonstrated a strong support for collaborative learning in line with CLT principles. The highest score was obtained for pair- and group work effectiveness (M=4.03), while teacher-led (M=2.7.) and whole-class work (M=2.84) were not given precedence by the participants.

Table 3: *Group interaction and their perceived effectiveness*

Group interaction	M	SD
TLT Pair- and group work is very time-consuming and less effective than teacher-led work.	2.7	1.02
Learning as a whole class is more effective than pair- and group work. Small group work can be used in the lesson only occasionally.	2.84	1.07
CLT Pair- and group work is effective because it facilitates genuine communication among students. It should be a regular part of a lesson.	4.03	1.03

M=mean

SD=standard deviation

Student teachers' beliefs about language use (Table 4) in the instructional process likewise align with CLT. The participants were convinced of the utility of interactions in the target language (M=4.3) and its predominant use (M=4.14), and they mainly rejected the idea that teachers can frequently resort to the learners' first language (M=3.27).

Table 4: *Language use preferences: native language vs. target language*

Language use	M	SD
TLT		
Teaching English can take place in the native language of students whenever necessary (even for half of the lesson or more).	3.27	.88
It is unrealistic to expect students to communicate with one another or the teacher in English.	2.17	1.1
CLT		
The teacher should speak English rather than the learners' mother tongue in the lesson.	4.14	.89
Students should use English to communicate with one another and the teacher.	4.3	.79

M=mean

SD=standard deviation

Contrary to previous observations, students' beliefs about learner and teacher roles ran counter to the contemporary learner-centered paradigm. While they acknowledged that a language teacher was mainly a facilitator of learning (M=4.33) who carefully considered learners' needs and interests (M=4.05), they still thought it unreasonable to let students decide for themselves how and what to learn (M=2.98) as they were not sufficiently competent (M=3.38). Additionally, they most likely adopted an authoritative teaching style by carefully controlling all proceedings in the lessons (M=4.27), and by believing that their principal responsibility was to transmit knowledge (M=4.1).

Table 5: *Beliefs about teacher and learner roles*

Roles	M	SD
TLT		
It is almost impossible to teach English taking into account each student's interests and needs. It is too much of an imposition on the teacher (asking too much of a teacher).	3.34	1.1
The teacher should carefully control the procedure of the lesson.	4.27	.8
The teacher should carefully lead all discussions in the lesson.	3.83	.9
The teacher knows better what students need to know and how they should learn.	3.52	.98
The teachers' principal responsibility is to transmit knowledge, e.g., by explaining new material and directing activities.	4.1	.89
The students are not competent enough to select the material and tasks to work on in the lesson or as homework.	3.38	.92
CLT		
Learners should take responsibility for their learning.	4.14	.91

The teachers' principal role is to facilitate learning (help students learn).	4.33	.87
The teacher should allow students to select what they want to learn and do in the lessons.	2.98	1.18
Students learn best when they can explore the material for themselves.	3.73	.98
The teacher should organize teaching taking into account students' interests and needs.	4.05	.92

M=mean

SD=standard deviation

The analysis of participants' beliefs about language teaching approaches and methods (Table 6) revealed a balanced stance. For one thing, students unanimously support the belief that all language skills should be developed holistically (M=4.55), respect for learners (M=4.59), cooperation among students (M=4.02), and target language interaction as the foundation of language acquisition (M=4.41). Moderate support was documented for task-based learning (M=3.55), content-based instruction (M=3.38), and integration of technologies or computer-assisted language learning (M=3.8). However, repetition and habit formation underlying audiolingualism (M=4.31) and careful attention to language forms as the basis of language teaching (grammar-translation) (M=3.58) also indicate robust support.

**Table 6**: *Attitudes towards approaches and methods*

Approaches and methods	M	SD
TLT Careful attention to language forms (e.g., grammatical structures, words, phrases) is the basis of language teaching.	3.58	.92
Repetition is the basis of language learning, because it helps develop language habits.	4.31	.81
Reading comprehension is the main skill worth emphasizing.	3.1	.88
CLT Interaction (communication) in the target language is the basis of language learning.	4.41	.83
The teacher should provide a balanced practice in all four language skills (speaking, writing, reading, and listening)	4.55	.83
Language is best learned when one is solving meaningful tasks and not analyzing language elements.	3.55	.91
The class atmosphere is more important than activities in the lesson.	3.42	.92
Students learn the language best when the teacher shows respect and cares for them.	4.59	.77

	M	SD
Students' cooperating and interacting with one another facilitates language learning.	4.02	.89
Language is learned effectively when dealing with the material from other disciplines that interest students (e.g., history, literature, geography). It is not necessary to make language forms (e.g., words, grammar, pronunciation) the central focus of the lesson.	3.38	1.05
Modern technologies are indispensable in language teaching.	3.8	.91

M=mean

SD=standard deviation

Figure 1 visualizes the results of the comparative analysis of student teachers' beliefs about principles of language instruction.
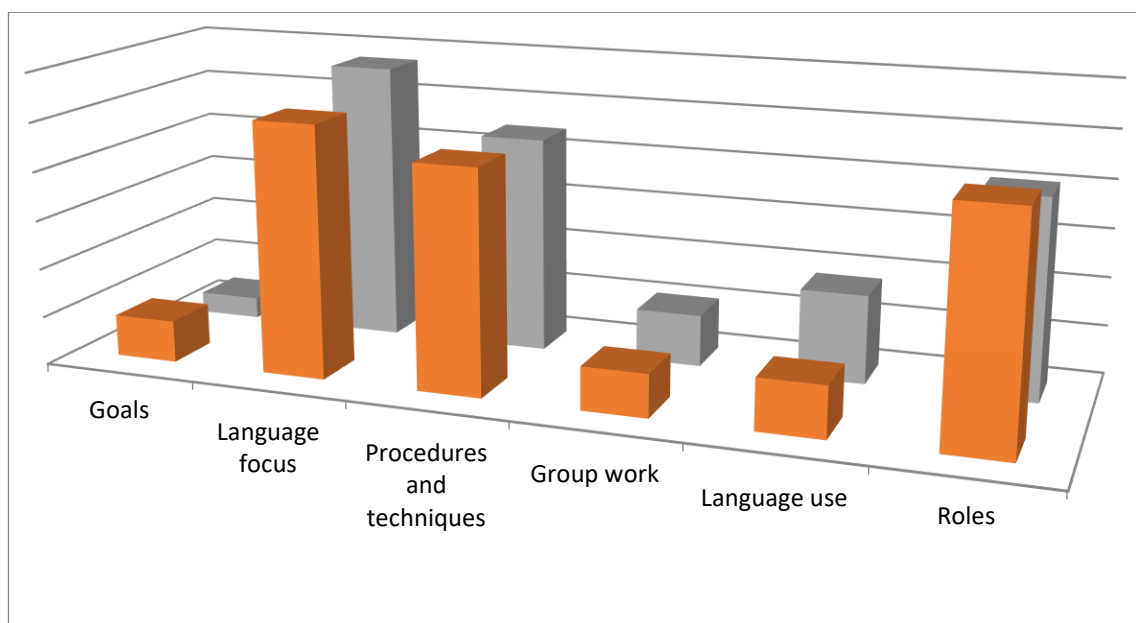
Fig. 1. Comparison of beliefs

Overall, the summative findings indicate the participants' preference for contemporary language teaching approaches with selective endorsement of TLT principles. Although authentic communication and interaction in the target language were central to students' understanding, linguistic accuracy and attention to language forms also featured centrally. As such, the participants' beliefs tend to align with CLT, which advocates for eclectic and adaptable teaching practices.

2.5. Discussion

While the principles of contemporary language teaching are widely promoted in EFL education, the extent of their endorsement by aspiring teachers remains underexplored. Therefore, this study looked into the beliefs of EFL student teachers about contemporary approaches as they intersect with traditional language teaching. Specifically, the study employed a questionnaire developed by Lőrincz (2023) to investigate the participants' beliefs about such language teaching facets as goals, instructional procedures, student interaction, and teacher and learner roles. Data were collected from sixty-four undergraduate EFL students nearing the completion of their program and analyzed quantitatively to identify trends in their preferences for CLT and TLT principles.

The findings reveal that though the participants mainly favored principles of contemporary approaches by fostering fluency, meaningful interactions in the target language, and collaborative learning, they also moderately supported features of TLT like grammar-focused instruction, accuracy, repetition, and teacher-centeredness. Given this, student teachers' responses may reflect openness to a balanced approach and eclecticism, where both innovation and adherence to verified through time traditional practices are combined.

As such, these results echo prior research demonstrating that language teachers tend to combine the strengths of CLT and TLT to meet diverse learner needs (e.g., Ellis, 2016; Lőrincz, 2023; 2025; Scheffler, 2013). The findings also align with Borg (2003), who studied the interplay between pre-existing beliefs and professional growth during teacher education and development. The moderate support for traditional practices like drills, accuracy, and translation may also point to the influence of prior language learning experiences or classroom realities. Such persistence of traditional beliefs corroborates the observations of Tang et al. (2012), who noted a deep-rooted impact of learning experiences.

Interestingly, the participants' beliefs about teacher and learner roles disclosed a tension between learner autonomy central to CLT and traditional views of teacher authority. Even though they were convinced that teachers should act as facilitators of language learning, they were reluctant to relinquish control, showing their reservations about learner-centeredness. Such a duality of views reflects Farrell's (2019) observations regarding the gap between course content delivered at universities and its practical construal in the classroom by novices. Accordingly, to bridge this gap, teacher education programs should encourage student teachers to use aspects of traditional approaches more judiciously, leveraging their strengths while prioritizing communicative goals.

CONCLUSIONS

The first part of the thesis traced the development of language teaching approaches considering linguistic, psychological, and socio-cultural perspectives. It looked into key milestones and methodological shifts shaping the field of language teaching over centuries, focusing on the transition from traditional to communicative approaches and post-method condition. One of its conclusions is the cyclical nature of language teaching innovations. Methods once celebrated as groundbreaking appeared to be rediscoveries of earlier teaching practices.

The emergence of language teaching as a discipline in its own right in the 19th century was marked by a shift from intuition-driven language instruction to evidence-based methods grounded in linguistics and psychology. The field saw the rapid development of numerous methodologies throughout the 20th century, spanning the grammar-translation method and audiolingualism up to communicative language teaching. The latter represented a move from structure-based instruction to meaning-oriented interaction targeting learners' ability to use language for real-life purposes.

The post-method era, holding sway in the last decades, abandons the notion of a universal language teaching method marked by a context-sensitive approach and eclecticism. By incorporating principles from various approaches and methods, contemporary language teaching prioritizes adaptability to diverse educational milieus and needs of learners. The rise of task-based learning, content-based instruction, and other learner-centered approaches demonstrate the ongoing development of the language-teaching field, driven by empirical insights and hands-on demands.

The second part of the thesis was devoted to the study of EFL student teachers' beliefs about contemporary and traditional language teaching, with the aim of disclosing their instructional preferences. The findings provided insights into how prospective teachers perceived and reconciled the principles of CLT with those of TLT. Although the participants demonstrated a strong inclination toward contemporary methodology, including meaningful target language interactions, focus on fluency, and collaborative learning, they also partly believed in the utility of traditional aspects, especially emphasizing accuracy, focus on grammar, and teacher-centeredness. While these may appear as conflicting views, their preferences may reflect an acceptance of post-methodology and an openness to eclectic principles founded on informed decision-making by teachers in selecting context-bound teaching approaches. The participants underscored holistic language instruction and the utility of communicative competence, as shown by their support of target-language interactions,

contextualized grammar instruction, and cooperative learning. At the same time, the persistence of traditional beliefs points to the impact of prior learning experiences and classroom realities.

Future research could look into cross-cultural differences between student teachers' beliefs to understand how contextual factors affect the adoption of the principles of CLT and TLT in language education.

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Appendix A

Primary focus on forms and accuracy (TLT)
Knowing the rules of grammar is necessary for effective communication. They help learners to talk to native speakers.
Explicit grammar teaching (teaching rules, doing grammar exercises) should occur in almost every lesson.
Accurate use of language is the principal criterion of language knowledge.
The teacher should present words and grammar structures in isolation so that learners understand their meaning and usage.
The teacher should emphasize correct language production.
Over-emphasizing communication in the lessons leads to students' inability to speak correctly.
One has truly mastered a language only if one speaks without errors.

Primary focus on meaning and fluency (CLT)
The teacher should focus on developing students' ability to engage in real-life communication in English.
Grammar structures and words are best taught in a meaningful context.
The primary focus of the lesson should be meaningful language use, with some attention given to the form (grammar, words).
Knowledge of grammar rules is not enough for effective communication.
It is possible to speak fluently without knowing the rules.
Some grammar structures can be taught implicitly (without rules).
Students should be taught to do things with language, i.e., apologize, promise, invite, agree or disagree.
The ability to communicate ideas effectively and appropriately for the context is more important than producing grammatically correct sentences.
Goals of language education (TLT)
A realistic goal of language teaching is the ability to read and understand language with a dictionary.
Becoming a fluent speaker of English is an unrealistic goal in the EFL context.
Goals of language education (CLT)
Becoming a fluent speaker of English is the ultimate goal of language education.

Classroom procedures and techniques
TLT
Translation should be a central part of the lesson.
The teacher should strive to cover all material and exercises included in a textbook.
Drills (e.g., exercises in which learners repeat sentence patterns) are extremely effective in language teaching.
Analysis of syntactic structures is indispensable for effective learning and should be regularly used in the lessons.
Memorization of dialogues and texts is essential in language teaching.
Tasks teaching the correct use of language should prevail in the lessons.
CLT
Activities simulating real-life communication should prevail in the lessons.
The teacher should use activities that resemble real-world tasks.

The teacher should supply learners with additional materials apart from course books based on students' individual needs.

The teacher should use authentic materials (e.g., advertisements, travel brochures, menus) in teaching English.

Using games and role-plays simulating real-life communication is essential for language learning.

Group work organization
TLT
Pair and group work is very time-consuming and less effective than teacher-led work.
Learning as a whole class is more effective than pair and group work. Small group work can be used in the lesson only occasionally.
CLT
Pair and small group work facilitate genuine communication and increases learners' speaking time. It should be a regular part of a lesson.

Language use
TLT
It is unrealistic to expect students to communicate with one another or the teacher in English.
Teaching English can take place in the native language of students whenever necessary (even for half of the lesson or more).
CLT
Students should use English to communicate with one another and the teacher.
The teacher should speak English rather than the learners' mother tongue in the lesson.

Teacher-centered education (TLT)
It is almost impossible to teach English taking into account each student's interests and needs.
The teacher should carefully lead all discussions in the lesson.
The teacher knows better what students need to know and how they should learn.
The teacher's principal responsibility is to transmit knowledge, e.g., by ex-plaining new material and directing activities.
The teacher should carefully control the procedure of the lesson.
The students are not competent enough to select the material and tasks to work on in the lesson or as homework.
Learner-centered education (CLT)
Learners should take responsibility for their learning.
The teachers' principal role is to facilitate learning.
The teacher should organize teaching taking into account students' interests and needs.
The teacher should allow students to select what they want to learn and do in the lessons.
Students learn best when they can explore the material for themselves.

Foundational principles of language teaching approaches
Students learn the language best when the teacher shows respect and genuine concern.
Affective-humanistic approach
Interaction in the target language is the basis of language learning.
Communicative approach
Repetition is the basis of language learning because it helps develop language habits.
Audiolingualism
Students' cooperating and interacting with one another facilitates language learning.
Cooperative learning
Modern technologies are indispensable in language teaching.
Computer-assisted language learning

Careful attention to language forms (e.g., grammatical structures, words) is the basis of language teaching.

Grammar-translation Cognitive-code learning

Language is best learned by solving meaningful tasks and not analyzing language elements.

Task-based learning

Language is learned effectively when dealing with the material from other disciplines that interest students (e.g., history, literature). It is not necessary to make language forms the central focus of the lesson.

Content-based instruction

English is learned much like the native language.

Direct method, Natural approach

Reading comprehension is the main skill worth emphasizing.

Reading method

РЕЗЮМЕ

Робота присвячена дослідженню уявлень майбутніх учителів англійської мови як іноземної щодо сучасних і традиційних підходів до викладання іноземних мов. З огляду на сучасні тенденції в освітній політиці України, суголосні з реформою «Нова українська школа», націленій на розвиток іншомовної комунікативної компетентності учнів, постає необхідність з'ясувати рівень готовності здобувачів до впровадження відповідних змін у своїй професійній діяльності. Таким чином, мета дослідження полягала у виявленні сприйняття студентів доцільності застосування сучасних лінгводидактичних підходів і методів.

У першому розділі здійснено ретроспективний аналіз підходів до навчання іноземних мов з урахуванням лінгвістичних, психологічних і соціокультурних аспектів. Розглянуто ключові етапи та тенденції розвитку іншомовної освіти – від граматико-перекладного методу до «постметодичної» ери. Основний акцент зроблено на висвітленні сучасних підходів, зокрема змістовно-базованому навчанні, навчанні на основі виконанні завдань та компетентнісно-орієнтованому навчанні мов.

Другий розділ роботи присвячено вивченню уявлень майбутніх учителів англійської мови як іноземної про сучасні й традиційні лінгводидактичні підходи з метою виявлення їхніх уподобань. Дослідження виконане із застосуванням методу анкетування та статистичної обробки даних. Вибірку становлять 64 здобувачів першого (бакалаврського) рівня вищої освіти, які пройшли виробничу практику на четвертому курсі. На підставі одержаних результатів розкрито, яким чином респонденти сприймають та узгоджують принципи сучасних і традиційних підходів в іншомовній освіті. Попри загальну підтримку сучасних методів, опитувані частково вбачають доцільність використання більш традиційних підходів, зокрема через акцентування граматичної точності, експліцитного навчання граматики та домінуючої ролі викладача. Відтак, студенти виявляють прихильність до еклектичного стилю викладання, що полягає у поєднанні характеристик різноманітних методів відповідно до контекстуальних вимог.

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