

## COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH ENGLISHCLASS101.COM: TO UNRAVEL THE UNDERPINNING METHODOLOGY

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**Abstract.** English Language Teaching (ELT) is supposed to assist learners in actual life at the marketplace. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) globally has flourished with tremendous products to address the purpose, e.g., EnglishClass101.com. Though this website includes a few aspects of ELT, the learning platform draws our attention for its affordability of price, feasibility of use, and recency of topics. The present study aims to unravel the underpinning teaching methodology of the website, with a particular focus on English grammar teaching. The present study employs a qualitative study design with two instruments of data collection: observation and transcription of lesson videos. The results indicate that contextual English grammar was used and integrated with lessons (newest and favorite); vocabulary (lists, words of the day, common words, key phrases); teacher assistance (explanation, assessment, tests). Majorly, two methods have been elaborated throughout the lessons on the website, i.e., Communicative Language Teaching, and Direct Method. Additionally, a few techniques are performed including teachers' gestures for meaning, annotation, repetition, drill, elicitation, option matching, deductive and inductive approach. The findings imply that any CALL products remain in use when the aspects of lessons involve daily topics and select feasible ELT methods.

**Keywords:** CALL; Contextual Grammar Teaching; Methods.

### INTRODUCTION

Technology has been widely used in facilitating English Language Teaching (ELT). The integration of technology into EFL learning is inevitable, for example, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Throughout the world wide web, the number of CALL products are flourishing either affordable or expensive ones. Enormous products are open for global users (hereafter learner users). For example, EnglishClass101.com has been running its program online for more than 12 years. They have an enormous number of lessons. Even though this website only covers a small portion of ELT, the learning platform captures our interest due to its reasonable cost, usability, and current themes. One may wonder, though, whether relevant ELT methods underlie the website designs as many learner users are using.

ELT methods help learner users focus on the language used for communication purposes. Of the factors influencing successful EFL learning, both teachers applying ELT methods and technology mediate the learning effect greatly. Teaching is about the responsibility of assisting learners to improve skills, positive attitudes, deeper insights, enhanced ideas, and appreciation (Vin-Mbah, 2012). The wholistic goal of

teaching is achieved through well-coordinated efforts including roles of teachers, students, facilities, and materials.

Harmer (2007) illustrates teachers as similar to actors because their creativity and skills affect the transfer of knowledge to students and in conducting interactive classes. Thus the teachers should be well-equipped with ELT methods and techniques. Brown (2000) states that none ELT method is a panacea or one method fits all, yet consideration of class context and student levels is necessarily important. Methods are selected based on class dynamics and learners' needs (Edisherashvili, 2014).

In the EFL context, grammar learning lays ground knowledge for EFL learners, though contextual grammar teaching should be prioritized. However, many think teaching the language aspect, grammar is a waste of time. Despite the controversy, Thornbury (2002) underlines that learners are expected in comprehending written or spoken English, along with the system rule of the grammar of a target language since grammar is to make meaning. In a similar vein, Dykes (2007) suggests that teachers should teach English grammar more simply and easily.

With an emphasis on English grammar specifically, the objective of the present study is to decipher the answer to a research question "What are the ELT methods and techniques underlying the website design for English grammar teaching?"

### **Popular ELT Methods and the Techniques**

According to Hasanova (2021), methods and techniques used by ELT teachers are one of several factors that determine students' success in learning. Further, he adds that although, methods and techniques are teachers' choice to employ, both methods and techniques will depend more on English skills and components, teaching and learning objectives, and students' English proficiency. British Council (2015) defines an approach as a way of looking at teaching and learning. These imply that approaches, methods, and techniques complement each other and hence identification of approaches, methods, and techniques should be relevant to students' qualities. On the other hand, the British Council specifies that a method is an ordered, systematic, and well-planned procedure aimed at facilitating and improving students' learning, whereas technique refers to the teacher's style in carrying out specific steps of the teaching process.

Some ELT popular methods among ELT settings are Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method (DM), Audiolingualism Method (ALM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Total Physical Response (TPR), Suggestopedia, Disuggestopedia, Natural Approach, Situational Approach, and Communicative Approach. Of the total, the first four are highlighted in the present context as they are commonly encountered in many EFL settings up to now.

Although GTM is well-known as one of the classical methods, Elmayanti (2015) mentioned reasons teachers use GTM due to the method's benefits, namely improving vocabulary and comprehension of texts. In addition, GTM could aid students in learning English (Khan & Mansoor, 2016). Yet, the method allows the teacher to use the mother tongue in teaching. The method has some techniques including translation, reading comprehension questions, antonym versus synonym, cognates, deductive application of rules, fill-in-the-blanks exercise, memorization, use of words in sentences, use words in sentences, and composition (Larsen-Freeman, 2015).

On the other hand, DM is very contradictive to GTM although both methods are common in EFL contexts. GTM limits fluency in communicating the target language while the DM provides the most exposure to English (Spahiu, & Kryeziu, 2021). As a reformed method, DM binds meaning between words, sentences, experiences, and expressions without English-to-L1 translation (Larsen-Freeman, 2015). Rao (2019) lists techniques of DM, such as reading aloud, question and answer, getting students to self-correct, conversation practice, grammar rules, dictation, map drawing, and paragraph writing.

Similar to the behaviouristic approach, another common method for grammar teaching is ALM. The techniques are dialogue memorization, short conversations, the backward build-up (expansion) drill, repetition, chain drill, single/multiple-slot substitution drill, transformation drill, grammar game, and minimal pairs (Larsen-Freeman, 2015).

Among other ELT methods, CLT sustains its popularity up to current days due to its focus on meaning from students' real-life situations rather than accuracy. CLT is regarded as a pedagogical strategy for interacting in the classroom to accomplish learning objectives. According to Brandl (2019), CLT adheres to several principles, including the use of task-based instruction, a focus on learning by doing, acquiring meaningful and comprehensible input, a focus on cooperative and collaborative learning, and the teaching of grammar through communicative tasks and contexts.

### **Contextual Grammar Teaching**

Abdukarimova and Zubaydova (2021) delineate two main approaches for teaching grammar contextually, i.e., deductive and inductive. This implies that each approach is in use according to the relevant context, yet not in a rigid teaching flow. Within the inductive approach, students move from the specific (examples) to the general (rules) - many instances are exposed to students, and draw conclusions based on the examples (Gill & Kusum, 2017). While according to them, the deductive approach is the inverse by which the rules are provided to students at first and followed by presenting examples. This implies that once students understand the rules, they can apply the rules to various example-making. Giving grammatical rules is by directing the learners' attention to the problem being discussed. Although the inductive approach exploits the value of order, clarity, and meaning of experience, the approach involves students' active participation in their instruction. In addition, it encourages students to develop their mental strategies for handling tasks.

One example of contextual EFL grammar teaching in one private university in the eastern part of Indonesia outlines the EFL syllabus that consists of subject-verb agreement, noun phrases, adjective clauses, adverbial clauses, noun clauses, passive voice, conditional forms, in addition to un/countable nouns, singularity versus plurality, all kinds of pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs (English Study Program, 2015). The syllabus shows specific grammar knowledge needs in a particular program which might be different from other EFL contexts.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present study employs a qualitative design. Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe the qualitative study as research based on qualitative data including

descriptions, accounts, opinions, and feelings rather than any complex statistical analysis.

### **Data Resource**

The data was primarily compiled from the Englishclass101.com website, with a total of 10 videos. They were retrieved on May 14, 2020, which consisted of the top 10 phrasal verbs for eating and drinking in English; the top 10 phrasal verbs for the office in English; and the top 10 phrasal verbs for talking about vehicles in English. (<https://bit.ly/2liMR1g>, <https://bit.ly/2HYmNtt> and <https://bit.ly/2HXLXIF> ).

### **Instruments**

Two research instruments were designed for data collection such as a table of checklists for observation of the videos and the videos' transcription. Each video observation lasted for 30 minutes up to an hour. The observation was intentional to record in details important information while the videos were playing. Transcriptions are made for deep analysis

### **Procedures**

The study began by quickly reviewing the EnglishClass101.com website. Next, the selection of videos from the website was based on different grammar point topics – to suit the objective of the study. Then, video selection as the primary data resource went to three videos. The number of selected videos was due to the limited time of the study. Driven by theories, the authors designed a table of checklists. After validating the table, the authors observed each video for 30 minutes up to an hour using the checklist table while jotting down important details. Follow-up observation was taken when necessary. Last, for further analysis, the researchers made video transcription.

### **Data Analysis**

The study employs qualitative data analysis by examining the video transcription, double-checking on the checklist, and referring to the theoretical framework. The interpretation of important findings includes all presented data in the table, and this aims at reaching conclusive findings. The data are presented in three parts, namely the overall teaching delivered within the videos (exemplary transcribed utterances of the teacher), the teaching methods as shown in the videos, and the methods underlie grammar teaching along with techniques used.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### *1. Computer Assisted Language Learning: The Features of EnglishClass101.com website*

#### *1.1 The Website Components*

EnglishClass101.com website offers some ELT components as Figure 1 portrays lessons (integration of conversation, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, culture), vocabulary (word bank, words of the day, common words, English phrases), teacher's guidance (messenger, assessment, tests).

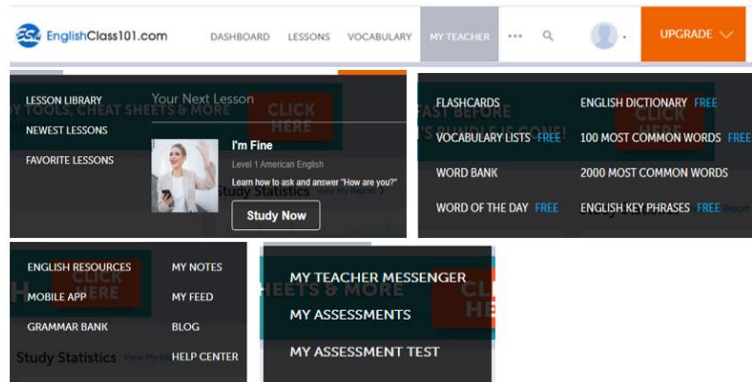


Figure 1. Features of EnglishClass101.com (retrieved from <https://www.englishclass101.com>)

Further, the website accommodates flexibility, through the features, to learner users. This is to set level either as absolute beginner, beginner, intermediate, upper intermediate, or advanced users. The design is quite feasible to engage in various lessons (e.g. Level 1, has 1-35 topics and ends with a Level 1 exam) just shown by Figure 2.

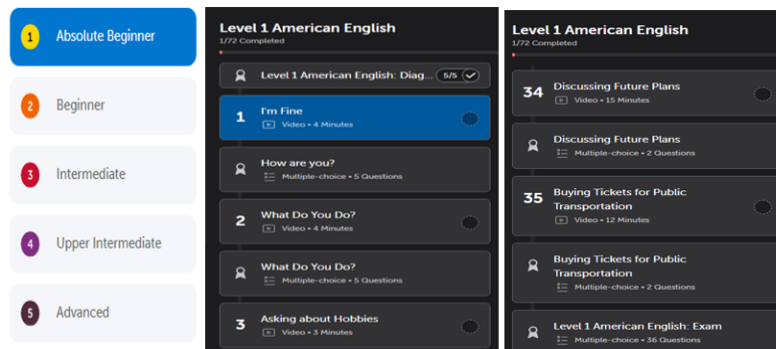


Figure 2. Feasibility: Setting Level & Lessons of Each Level (retrieved from <https://www.englishclass101.com/dashboard>)

The findings later display a teacher, named Alisha (Figure 3), which was explaining a topic (monologue), but then she was enhancing the lesson through the use of an animated video on her left top. To her right, the 20-28 topics of the lesson are provided for the learner users to pick any suitable lessons to their interests.

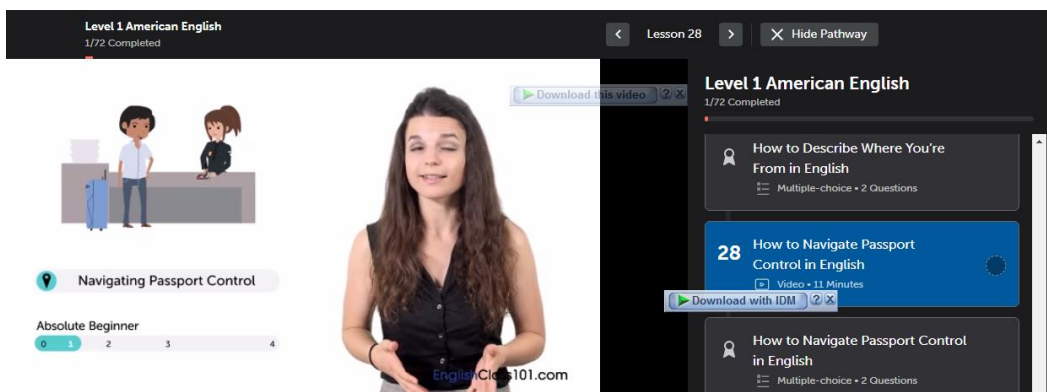


Figure 3. Teacher Explanation and Animated Video

(retrieved from <https://www.englishclass101.com/lesson>)

Next, Figure 4 entails how the teacher's verbal explanation is made salient to the learner users using annotations underneath, regardless of their English level. Even the learner users can play either backward or forward the videos in catching up on the missing part or skipping some lines. Just after the explanation, she asked the learner users to exercise while utilizing the teacher's repetition and elicitation drills as indicated on the right side.

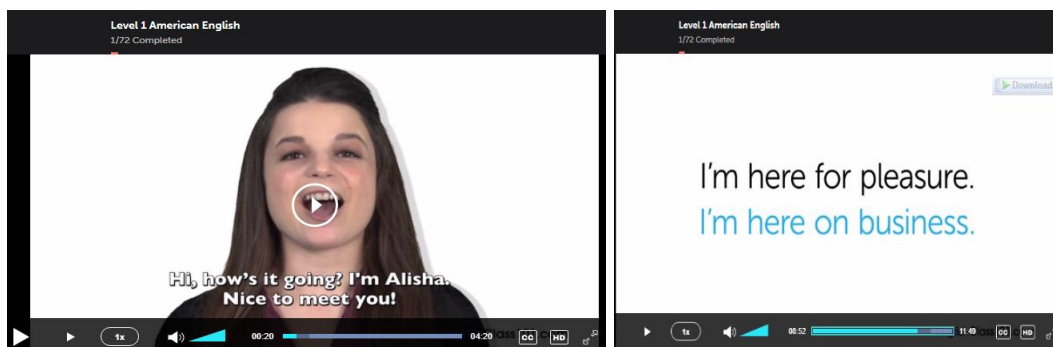


Figure 4. Teacher Explanation, Annotation, Repetition, and Elicitation Drills (retrieved from <https://www.englishclass101.com/lesson>)

According to Betitez-Correa et al. (2019), for students to understand English grammar, they must be introduced to context through texts. The annotated videos have served the purpose of grammar teaching. Also, a technique of ALM, i.e., using highlighted font color has been found successful in the teacher's explanation. By having two different colors, the examples attract the attention of the audience. In regards to the context of grammar teaching, the teaching places various situations as commonly encountered in different English-speaking countries with the setting of specific contexts, e.g. UK, USA, and Australia (Figure 5).

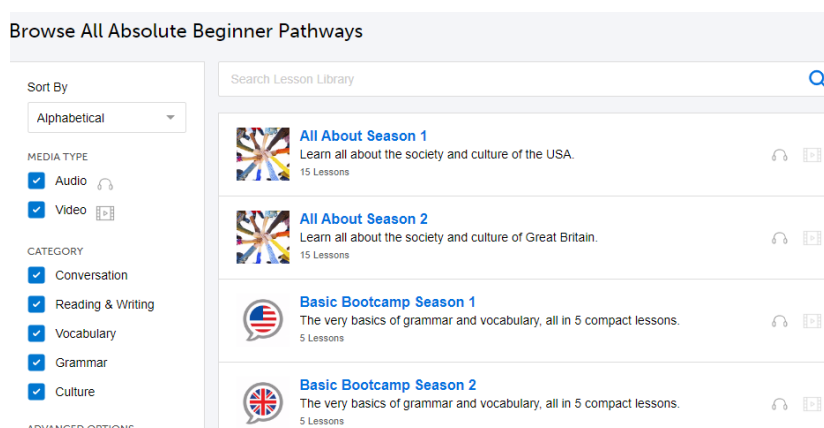


Figure 5. Contextual Grammar Teaching (retrieved from <https://www.englishclass101.com/dashboard>)

According to Aziz et al. (2019), contextual teaching and learning are a notion that enables teachers to connect subject matter content to real-world situations and inspires students to connect knowledge with its practical application to their lives as global citizens in the marketplace. This includes contextual grammar teaching.

2. The ELT Methodology Underpinning the Website Design

2.1. Techniques Employed

Following are tables consisting of compacted information on the videos' details. First, Table 1 indicates that the teacher utilizes the target language (English) and maintains its use even for explaining grammar in contexts. Some topics are integrated for teaching several grammar points. The teacher elaborated on DM and CLT in videos 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1. Top Ten Phrasal Verbs for Eating and Drinking (Summary of Video 1)

Duration: 08:59 minutes		Teacher: Alisha	
Speaking: Monologue			
Explanation & Practice	Example	Method	Technique
App. 1	Our beers are here! everybody, <b>drink up!</b> Meaning: to start drinking or enjoying drinking.	DM CLT	Deductive Repetition
	When you are ready, I can <b>take down</b> your order. Meaning: to take an order into the entire pieces.		
	When I <b>cut into</b> the chicken, all the juices come out. Meaning: to make one slice into something.		
	I like to <b>sop up</b> with bread. Meaning: to sop with liquid.		
	Make sure to let your mashed potatoes <b>cook.</b> Meaning: to make something well cooked.		
	<b>I down</b> before you try to eat them Meaning: to let something to the lower temperature.		
	I like to <b>head up</b> my pizza before I eat it. Meaning: to increase the temperature of something, e.g., of a microwave.		
	We're gonna <b>chow down</b> some barbeque this weekend. Meaning: to eat very excitedly.		

(retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2liMR1g>)

Several principles of DM underpin grammar teaching in three videos. Besides the language, only daily vocabulary and familiar sentences are taught while the deductive approach was in use (Aziz & Dewi, 2019). Oral explanations along with demonstrations of objects, and images are useful to associate ideas (Larsen-Freeman, 2015). This way helps the learner users to grasp the messages and digest the basic grammatical rules. Thus, oral communication skills in combination with

listening are the two channels in teaching. Although correct pronunciation and grammar were made clear by the teacher, the learner users were not strictly required to imitate. The teacher only did this to model comprehensive English pronunciation for online learner users.

Moreover, as Table 2 presents, the teacher did not only use the techniques suggested by the method, but she also added other techniques of other ELT methods into grammar teaching. The teacher taught students using the direct method and combined other ELT teaching techniques. This way is known as an eclectic approach. The eclectic approach enables teaching by combining the strengths of various methods, competencies, and pedagogies (Billah, 2015).

Table 2. Top Ten Phrasal Verbs for the Office (Summary of Video 2)

Duration: 11:20 mins Speaking: Monologue		Teacher: Alisha	
Explanation & Practice	Example	Method	Technique
App. 2	We're going to <b>kick off</b> some new projects next year. Meaning: to start something like a big project.	DM CLT	Deductive Repetition Drill
	We need to <b>set out</b> some guidelines for this project. Meaning: to decide or choose something within a project. Do you have time to check in about this letter? Meaning: to update something.		

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Explanation & Practice	Example	Method	Technique
	I want to <b>go through</b> our new policies with everyone in the company. Meaning: to review something.		
	It's important to <b>clock in</b> and <b>clock out</b> at the same time every day. Meaning: to begin our workdays; to register the time we begin; to leave work.		
	We should <b>start up</b> some new projects in a year. Meaning: to begin something or a new project.		
	I need to <b>call</b> my clients <b>back</b> . Meaning: to return a phone call.		
	Hey, can you <b>send over</b> the updated files? Meaning: to physically mail something.		
	I'm <b>cleaning out</b> my desk. Meaning: to clean something.		
	We need to <b>make up</b> for lost time. Meaning: to fix the problem of something lost; to put something makeup into the face.		
	We're going to kick off some new projects next year. Meaning:		

(retrieved from: <https://bit.ly/2HYmNtt>)

The teacher tried to stimulate her learner users to think further about the grammar points she had been addressing by adapting some ways to her online viewers.

The three videos showed monologues that helped to address grammar points in the lessons. The monologues are to replace conversation in real contexts. Through the monologues, the learner users can get sufficient opportunity to think, imagine and speak in the target language (English). The teacher acted as if there were counterparts in the monologues, accompanied by either videos or caricatures to address each point she mentioned. Thus, the way can help the learner users' EFL learning development. Avoidance of L1 and the absence of translation features the lessons (Spahiu & Kryeziu, 2021), as this was intentionally designed to use the most English exposure towards the EFL learner users, so they naturally learn English from all signs, links, hints, clues and comprehensible inputs in the website.

Moreover, what is more interesting is that the study finds that two approaches, deductive and inductive were interchangeably alternated in DM (Table 3).

Table 3. Top Ten Phrasal Verbs for Talking about Vehicles (Summary of Video 3)

Duration : 11:20mins		Teacher: Alisha	
Speaking: Monologue (using English)			
Explanation & Practice	Example	Method	Technique
App. 3	<b>Pull into</b> that place over there. Meaning: to drive very slowly to the parking area.	DM CLT	Deductive, Inductive Repetition Drill
	I'll <b>pull</b> the car <b>up</b> in front of the hotel. Meaning: to slowly drive and stop at a location.		
	The truck <b>backed up</b> until it touch the loading dock. Meaning: to go slowly refers to backup.		
	<b>Back into</b> the parking space. Meaning: to drive fully into something, usually for a parking space at the garage.		
	<b>Roll down</b> your window. It's hot here. Meaning: to roll the automatic window down in a car.		
	<b>Head down</b> this street for a while. Meaning: trying to navigate in the city.		
	I think you <b>run over</b> a squirrel. Meaning: to continue going on something using the car.		
	<b>Pull over</b> at the next rest stop. Meaning: to drive the car to the side of the road.		
	A super slow truck <b>pulled</b> out in front of us on the mountain road. Meaning: to exit from the parking space.		
	<b>Get on</b> the highway. Meaning: to join the car to the major road.		

(retrieved from: <https://bit.ly/2HXLXIF> )

Through deductive, the teacher provided a pattern and mentioned the words' meaning, whereas through inductive, the teacher introduced the topics, exemplified them at the beginning, and taught forms patterns of the topics. Before the complex topics explanation, the teacher defined the specific terms, mentioned the function of certain parts, and related each section of the topic.

There is also another important point of DM found in the study, i.e., the demonstrations and the use of teaching aids assisted the learner users' understanding of English grammar while exposing the users to communicative learning experiences.

There are also several skills found in the teaching videos, as they were inseparable parts of the teaching (Table 4). It is a consensus that English teaching should be taught integratively, which implies that one skill should be integrated with other skills but not treated as a discrete skill (Brandl, 2019). For this study analysis, the writer should examine parts by part to make them clear to the readers and for the analysis.

Table 4. Other Skills in Integration (Video 1-3)

Skill	Techniques
Listening	Listening for Details
	Annotation
	Elicitation
	Listening to General Information
Speaking	Listening for Comprehension
	Repetition Drills
	Monologue (the teacher explained without counterparts/students in the video)
	Gestures for Meaning
	Option Matching

Table 4 lists the teacher's repetition drills. According to Larsen-Freeman's (2015) research, learners learn grammar rules by repetition of examples and drills, and these rules are then retained in their brains for use at a later time.

Even though the videos were focused on grammar phrasal verbs, the teacher also integrated speaking and listening aspects into them. As learning is intentional, the website design organized the lesson to run systematically. The teacher clearly explained the learner users by modeling English pronunciation through her speech using monologue techniques. By that, the learner users can also learn the grammar used in speaking. In regards to listening for details, the lessons involve certain types of information besides the general ones to assist the learner users in various processes of understanding spoken language. They included recognition of speech sounds, understanding of the individual words meanings, perceived meaning of a statement to a question, and relevant conclusions based on the speaker's context, real-world knowledge, and certain attributes (e.g., information the speaker has access to and about what one is likely to get).

## CONCLUSION

Direct Method and Communicative Language Teaching dominate the teaching in EnglishClass101.com. The teacher also integrates several techniques such as repetition drills, and deductive and inductive approaches. Although student live interaction is absent from being captured in the website, the website successfully delivers the lesson interestingly to learner users on the other side (audience) through interactive and engaging shows. The lessons suit to daily topics that the learner users might find in their marketplace. Moreover, the lessons are easy to follow as the teacher employs all body gestures, facial expressions, caricatures, and sounds, to attract the audiences' attention to contextual grammar teaching on the website along with very useful features the learner users can access to.

The findings imply that ELT could be conducted beyond the classroom as time restriction is not an issue and massive materials are more open access nowadays. Both ELT teachers and learners could make the most use of the website since the methods and techniques employed are relevant to the recent needs of EFL learning.

Throughout the lessons on the website, two methods have been emphasized: Communicative Language Teaching and the Direct Method. Teachers' gestures for meaning, annotation, repetition, drill, elicitation, option matching, and deductive and inductive approaches are also used. The findings imply that any CALL products remain in use when the aspects of lessons involve daily topics and feasible ELT methods are chosen.

Future studies could extend research on contextual grammar teaching, particularly for different levels of learner users' targets.

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