

A STUDY ON APPROPRIATE METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN LANGUAGE IN RURAL AREAS OF INDIA

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Abstract:

Language teaching has a long, fascinating but rather tortuous history, in which a debate on teaching methods has evolved particularly over the last hundred years. The names of many of the methods (Grammar-translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-lingual Method, Communicative Teaching Method, etc) are familiar enough, yet the methods are not easy to grasp in practice because a method, however ill-defined it may be, is more than a single strategy or a particular technique. Language teaching approaches and methods have cast light on the language teaching theory and practice. There are still many controversies about their usefulness and appropriateness. This paper tries to analyze their effectiveness and weakness of several most influential teaching approaches and methods: Grammar-translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-lingual Method, Communicative Teaching Method, in order to have a better understanding and application in the future teaching practice.

Keywords: *teaching approaches and methods; effectiveness; weakness*

Introduction:

The history of Language teaching in India, as we know, has a long tradition. Memorization of vocabulary and translation of sentences often formed the major part of such learning process in the past. Ancient languages such as Sanskrit and Pali were mastered in India through the process of memorization of texts and vocabulary lists. "Learning vocabulary lists indeed formed the core of language learning

An experienced professional language teacher always adopts the **Principled Eclecticism** approach, deciding on the most suitable techniques and applying the most appropriate methodology for that learner's specific objectives, learning style and context.

Methods of teaching English have developed rapidly, especially in the previous 40 years. As a language learner, training manager, or teacher, it is important to understand the various methods and techniques so that you are able to navigate the market, make educated choices, and boost your enjoyment of learning a language.

Regarding the role and place of literature courses in language teaching programs, there are two different positions, namely essentialist and non-essentialist (Donato & Brooks, 2004; Edmondson, 1997; Scott & Tucker, 2002; Yuksel, 2007). Some scholars argue that studying literature may not even help the development of second language competence and proficiency (Edmondson, 1997). This non-essentialist position regards no or limited value of using literature in language teaching and argues that "it is not essential to handle literature in the interest of developing adequate L2 proficiency (...) and literary texts have no essence that distinguishes them from other type of texts" (Yuksel, 2007, p. 45, original emphasis). On the

other hand, an essentialist position supports the argument that the study of literature can facilitate the development of language proficiency (Lazar, 1993; McKay, 1982; Widdowson, 1984) as well as cultural awareness (Akyel & Yalcin, 1990; Ghosn, 2002; Lazar, 1993, 1994; McKay, 1982; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000; Shanahan, 1997), critical thinking (Ghosn, 2002; Lazar, 1993; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000), and motivation (Akyel & Yalcin, 1990; Ghosn, 2002; Lazar, 1993; McKay, 1982; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000) in a foreign/second language classroom. There is a growing body of books, chapters, and articles about the value of literature in foreign language teaching programs. In the 1980s, a lot of research was conducted with a view to identifying the role of literary texts in the language classrooms (Collie & Slater, 1987; Johnson, 1981; Widdowson, 1983). Some practitioners believe that literary texts should be used for language teaching purposes for a number of reasons. Carter & Long (1991) considered the study of literature as “a sine qua non for the truly educated person” (p. 1). Lazar (1993) stated that literature should be used in the language classroom because:

1. It is very motivating.
2. It is authentic material.
3. It has general educational value.
4. It is found in many syllabuses.
5. It helps students to understand another culture.
6. It is a stimulus for language acquisition.
7. It develops students' interpretative abilities.
8. Students enjoy it and it is fun.
9. It is highly valued and has a high status.
10. It expands students' language awareness.
11. It encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings.

Similarly, McKay (1982) claims that one of the most important contributions of using literature for language teaching purposes is that “literature presents language in discourse” (p. 530), which will exemplify why a specific language form should be used and in this way it will contribute to the development of students' language awareness. In addition to this

benefit, she also mentions some other benefits such as fostering students' reading proficiency, promoting tolerance for cultural differences, and leading to more creative students in the language classroom. Spack (1985), too, mentions the role of literature in creating more culturally-tolerant language learners and bringing about the concept of "language and cultural awareness" and she also points out that literature can serve as a stimulus for writing and composition. In the more recent literature about this topic, most authors review what has already been suggested by others so far and make some additional comments. For instance, Tasneen (2010) mentions the positive views of the students at international schools in Bangkok about the place of literary texts in the language classes. Bretz 47 (1990) defines the role of literature in foreign language teaching as "a springboard for the development of critical thinking and appreciation" (p. 335). Likewise, Inan (2009) claims that students will benefit from the communicative value of literary works since they will be exposed to some authentic materials.

Language Teaching Methodologies

The Direct Method

In this method the teaching is done entirely in the target language. The learner is not allowed to use his or her mother tongue. Grammar rules are avoided and there is emphasis on good pronunciation.

Grammar-translation

Learning is largely by translation to and from the target language. Grammar rules are to be memorized and long lists of vocabulary learned by heart. There is little or no emphasis placed on developing oral ability.

Audio-lingual

The theory behind this method is that learning a language means acquiring habits. There is much practice of dialogues of every situations. New language is first heard and extensively drilled before being seen in its written form.

The structural approach

This method sees language as a complex of grammatical rules which are to be learned one at a time in a set order. So for example the verb "to be" is introduced and practised before the present continuous tense which uses "to be" as an auxiliary.

Suggestopedia

The theory underlying this method is that a language can be acquired only when the learner is receptive and has no mental blocks. By various methods it is suggested to the student that the language is easy - and in this way the mental blocks to learning are removed.

Total Physical Response (TPR)

TPR works by having the learner respond to simple commands such as "Stand up", "Close your book", "Go to the window and open it." The method stresses the importance of aural comprehension.

Communicative language teaching (CLT)

The focus of this method is to enable the learner to communicate effectively and appropriately in the various situations she would be likely to find herself in. The content of CLT courses are functions such as inviting, suggesting, complaining or notions such as the expression of time, quantity, location.

The Silent Way

This is so called because the aim of the teacher is to say as little as possible in order that the learner can be in control of what he wants to say. No use is made of the mother tongue.

Community Language Learning

In this method attempts are made to build strong personal links between the teacher and student so that there are no blocks to learning. There is much talk in the mother tongue which is translated by the teacher for repetition by the student.

Immersion

This corresponds to a great extent to the situation we have at our school. ESL students are immersed in the English language for the whole of the school day and expected to learn math, science, humanities etc. through the medium of the target language, English.

Immigrant students who attend local schools find themselves in an immersion situation; for example refugee children from Bosnia attending German schools, or Puerto Ricans in American schools. Click here for many links to information about bilingual/immersion programs.

Task-based language learning

The focus of the teaching is on the completion of a task which in itself is interesting to the learners. Learners use the language they already have to complete the task and there is little correction of errors.

(This is the predominant method in middle school ESL teaching at Frankfurt International School. The tasks are subsumed in a major topic that is studied for a number of weeks. In the topic of ecology, for example, students are engaged in a number of tasks culminating in a

poster presentation to the rest of the class. The tasks include reading, searching the internet, listening to taped material, selecting important vocabulary to teach other students etc.)

The Natural Approach

This approach, propounded by Professor S. Krashen, stresses the similarities between learning the first and second languages. There is no correction of mistakes. Learning takes place by the students being exposed to language that is comprehensible or made comprehensible to them.

The Lexical Syllabus

This approach is based on a computer analysis of language which identifies the most common (and hence most useful) words in the language and their various uses. The syllabus teaches these words in broadly the order of their frequency, and great emphasis is placed on the use of authentic materials.

Conclusion:

Each of the different methods has contributed new elements and has attempted to deal with some issues of language learning. However, they derived in different historical context, stressed different social and educational needs and have different theoretical consideration. Therefore, in teaching practice, in order to apply these methods effectively and efficiently, practitioners should take these questions in mind: who the learners are, what their current level of language proficiency is, what sort of communicative needs they have, and the circumstances in which they will be using English in the future, and so on. In a word, no single method could guarantee successful results.

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