Volume-1, Issue-VI, Sept- 2017

Research maGma

An International Multidisciplinary Journal

CONFERENCE

of

Thiruvalluvar University
College of Arts & Science, Arakkonam.

on

"EMERGING TRENDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE"

DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

D. Annie

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of English, Bharathiar University

ABSTRACT

The English language teaching tradition has been subject to tremendous change. Perhaps more than any other discipline, this tradition has been practiced in English, in various versions, and in language classrooms, all around the world for centuries. In this short research, there are some milestones in the development of this tradition, which we will briefly touch upon, in an attempt to reveal the importance of the selection and implementation of the optimal methods and techniques for language teaching and learning.

KEY WORDS:

Methodology, Communication, Language, Proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Though this be madness, yet there is a method in it.

_Shakespeare

English as a language has great reach and influence; it is taught all over the world. The way English learners are instructed depends on their level of English proficiency and the programs provided in their schools or colleges. In some programs, instructions are taught in both, English and their home language. In other programs, instructions are only in English, but in a manner that is comprehensible to the students (Wright, 2010). Yet, there are other programs in which English Language Learners (ELLs) are pulled out of the classroom for separate English instruction, or the instruction can also be given in the classroom itself (Wright, 2010).

The English language teaching tradition has been subject to tremendous change. Perhaps more than any other discipline, this tradition has been practiced in English, in various versions, and in language classrooms all around the world for centuries. In this short research, there are some milestones in the development of this tradition, which we will briefly touch upon, in an attempt to reveal the importance of the selection and implementation of the optimal methods and techniques for language teaching and learning.

DIFFICULTIES FOR LEARNERS

Language teaching practice often assumes that most of the difficulties that learners face in the study of English are a consequence of the degree to which their native language differs from English. Language learners often produce errors in syntax, vocabulary and pronunciation of certain sounds incorrectly or with difficulty. This is known as "language interference". Some students may have very different cultural perceptions in the classroom as far as learning a second language is concerned. Cultural differences in communication styles and preferences are also significant.

TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

It prepares students for a wide range of career opportunities from education (e.g. teaching English as a second language) to research in language acquisition, to publishing, media, and the digital industry.

The aims and objectives are:
- To help students develop analytical and critical thinking skills.
- To provide students with an understanding of the process of language acquisition.
- To give students an appreciation of the possible applications of the knowledge of language.
- To provide students with knowledge about how to design and produce material in a language.
- To give students an appreciation of current practice and developments in language testing.
- To provide them with seminal practice.

VARIOUS TEACHING METHODOLOGIES
THE CLASSICAL METHOD

In the Western world back in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, foreign language learning was associated with the learning of Latin and Greek, both supposed to promote their speakers' intellectuality. At that time, it was of vital importance to focus on grammatical rules, syntactic structures, along with rote memorization of vocabulary and translation of literary texts. There was no provision for the oral use of the languages under study; after all, both Latin and Greek were not being taught for oral communication but for the sake of their speakers' becoming "scholarly" or creating an illusion of "learnedness." Late in the nineteenth century, the Classical Method came to be known as the Grammar Translation Method, which offered very little beyond an insight into the grammatical rules attending the process of translating from the second to the native language.

GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD

It is widely recognized that the Grammar Translation Method is still one of the most popular and favourite models of language teaching, which has been rather stalwart and invulnerable to educational reforms, and remaining a standard. With retrospection, we could say that its contribution to language learning has been lamentably limited, since it has shifted the focus from the real language to a "dissected body" of nouns, adjectives, and prepositions, doing nothing to enhance a student's communicative ability in the foreign language.

THE DIRECT METHOD

The last two decades of the nineteenth century accompanied in a new age. In this The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign Languages (1880), Francois Gouin described his "harrowing" experiences of learning German, which helped him gain insights into the intricacies of language teaching and learning. Living in Hamburg for one year, he attempted to master the German language by dint of memorising a German grammar book and to his surprise; he could not understand a word! After his failure, he decided to memorise the German roots, but with no success. He went so far as to memorise books, translate Goethe and Schiller, and learn by heart 30,000 words in a dictionary, only to meet with failure. Upon returning to France, Gouin discovered that his three-year-old nephew had managed to become a chatterbox of French - a fact that made him think that the child held the secret to learning a language. Thus, he began observing his nephew and came to the conclusion that language learning is a matter of transforming perceptions into conceptions and then using language to represent these conceptions. Equipped with this knowledge, he devised a teaching method. It was against this background that the Series Method was created, which taught learners directly a "series" of connected sentences that are easy to understand. For instance,

I stretch out my arm. I take hold of the handle. I turn the handle. I open the door. I pull the door. Nevertheless, this approach to language learning was short-lived and, only a generation later, gave place to the Direct Method, theorized by Charles Berlitz. The basic principle of Berlitz's method was that second language learning is similar to first language learning. In this light, there should be lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no translation, and little if any analysis of grammatical rules and syntactic structures. In short, the principles of the Direct Method were as follows:

✦ Classroom instruction was conducted in the target language
✦ There was an inductive approach to grammar
✦ Only everyday vocabulary was taught
✦ Concrete vocabulary was taught through pictures and objects, while abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas

The Direct Method enjoyed great popularity at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth but it was difficult to use, mainly because of the constraints of budget, time, and classroom size. Yet, after a period of decline, this method has been revived, leading to the emergence of the Audiolingual Method.

THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD

The outbreak of World War II heightened the need for Americans to become orally proficient in the languages of their allies and enemies alike. To this end, bits and pieces of the Direct Method were appropriated in order to form and support this new method, the "Army Method," which came to be known in the 1950s as the Audiolingual Method.

The Audiolingual Method was based on linguistic and psychological theory and one of its main premises was the scientific descriptive analysis of a wide assortment of languages. On the other hand, conditioning and habit-formation models of learning put forward by behaviouristic psychologists were marred with the pattern practices of the Audiolingual Method. The following points sum up the characteristics of the method:

✦ Dependence on mimicry and memorisation of set phrases
✦ Teaching structural patterns by means of repetitive drills
✦ No grammatical explanation
✦ Learning vocabulary in context
✦ Use of tapes and visual aids
✦ Focus on pronunciation
✦ Immediate reinforcement of correct responses

But its popularity diminished after 1964, partly because of Wilga Rivers's exposure of its shortcomings. It fell short of promoting communicative ability as it paid undue attention to memorisation and drilling, while downgrading the role of context and world knowledge in language learning. After all, it was discovered that language was not acquired through a process of habit formation and errors were not necessarily bad or malicious.

THE "DESIGNER" METHODS OF THE 1970s

The Chomskyan revolution in linguistics drew the attention of linguists and language teachers to the "deep structure" of language, while psychologists took account of the affective and interpersonal nature of learning. As a result, new methods were proposed, which attempted to capitalise on the importance of psychological factors in language learning. David Nunan (1989: 97) referred to these methods as "designer" methods, on the grounds that they took a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Let us have a look at two of these "designer" methods.

SUGGESTOPEDIA

Suggestopedia promised great results, if we use our brain power and inner capacities. Lozanov (1979) believed that we are capable of learning much more than we think. Drawing upon Soviet psychological research on yoga and extrasensory perception, he came up with a method for learning that used relaxation as a means of retaining new knowledge and material. It stands to reason that music played a pivotal role in his method. Lozanov and his followers tried to present vocabulary, readings, role-plays and drama with classical music in the background and students sitting in comfortable seats. In this way, students became "suggestible."

Of course, suggestopedia offered valuable insights into the "super learning" powers of our brain but it was demolished on several fronts. For instance, what happens if our classrooms are bereft of such amenities as comfortable seats and Compact Disk players? Certainly, this method is insightful and constructive and can be practised from time to time, without necessarily having to adhere to all its premises. A relaxed mind is an open mind and it can help a student to feel more confident and, in a sense, flexible.

THE SILENT WAY

The Silent Way rested on cognitive rather than affective arguments, and was characterised by a problem-solving approach to learning. Gattegno (1972) held that it is in learners' best interests to develop independence and autonomy and cooperate with each other in solving language problems. The teacher is supposed to be silent - hence the name of the method - and must disabuse himself of the tendency to explain everything to them.

The Silent Way came in for an onslaught of criticism. More specifically, it was considered very harsh, as the teacher was distant and, in general lines, the classroom environment was not conducive to learning.

STRATEGIES-BASED INSTRUCTION

The work of O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and others before and after them, emphasized the importance of style awareness and strategy development in ensuring mastery of a foreign language. In this vein, many textbooks and entire syllabi offered guidelines on constructing strategy-building activities. Below there is an example of a list of the "Ten Commandments" for good language learning (taken from Brown, H. D. [2000: 137]):

	Teacher's Version	Learner's Version
1	Lower inhibitions	Fear not!
2	Encourage risk-taking	Dive in
3	Build self-confidence	Believe in yourself
4	Develop intrinsic motivation	Seize the day
5	Engage in cooperative learning	Love thy neighbour
6	Use right-brain processes	Get the BIG picture
7	Promote ambiguity tolerance	Cope with the chaos
8	Practice intuition	Go with your hunches
9	Process error feedback	Make mistakes work FOR you
10	Set personal goals	Set your own goals

These suggestions cum injunctions are able to sensitize learners to the importance of attaining autonomy, which is, taking charge of their own learning, and not expecting the teacher to deliver everything to them.

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

The need for communication has been persistent, leading to the emergence of the Communicative Language Teaching. Having defined and redefined the construct of communicative competence; having explored the vast array of functions of language that learners are supposed to be able to accomplish; and having probed the nature of styles and nonverbal communication, teachers and researchers are now better equipped to teach (about) communication through actual communication, not merely theorizing about it.

At this juncture, we should say that Communicative Language Teaching is not a method; it is an approach, which transcends the boundaries of concrete methods and, parallel techniques. It is a theoretical position about the nature of language and language learning and teaching.

LET US SEE THE BASIC PREMISES OF THIS APPROACH:
✦ Focus on all of the components of communicative competence, not only grammatical or linguistic

competence.
✦ Engaging learners in the pragmatic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes
✦ Viewing fluency and accuracy as complementary principles underpinning communicative techniques
✦ Using the language in unrehearsed contexts

PRINCIPLED ECLECTICISM

An experienced professional language teacher always adopts the Principled Eclecticism approach, deciding on the most suitable techniques and applying the most appropriate methodology for the 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.
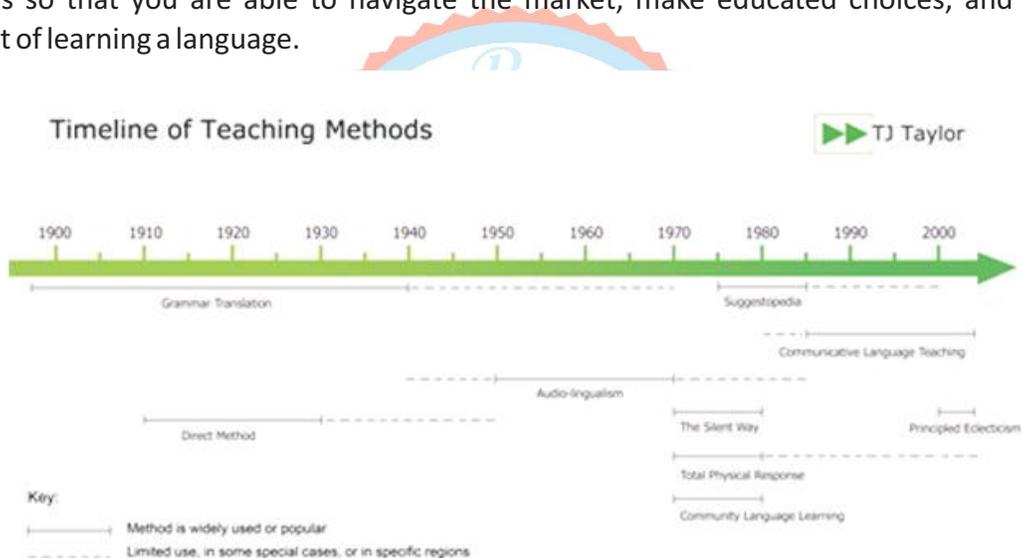
DIFFERENCES IN THE METHODS:

Each method has a different focus or priority.

Method	Focus	Characteristics
Grammar Translation Method	Written literary texts	Translate from English into your native language
Direct Method	Everyday spoken language	Student learns by associating meaning directly in English
Audio- Lingual Method	Sentence and sound patterns	Listening and speaking drills and pattern practice only in English
Cognitive Code Approach	Grammar rules	English grammar rules deduced and then understood in context

Humanistic Approaches –   4 popular examples:

– The Silent Way	Student interaction rather than teacher	Teacher is silent to allow student awareness of how English works
– Suggestopedia	Meaningful texts and vocabulary	Relaxed atmosphere, with music; encourages subliminal learning of English
–CommunityLanguage Learning	Student interaction	Understanding of English through active student interaction
– Comprehension Approach	Listening comprehension	English speaking delayed until students are ready; meaning clarified through actions and visuals
Communicative Language Teaching	Interaction, authentic communication and negotiating meaning	Understanding of English through active student interaction; role play, games, information gaps
Content-based, Task-based, and Participatory Approaches	What is being communicated, not structure of English	Content based on relevance to students' lives: topics, tasks, problem-solving
Learning Strategy Training, Cooperative Learning, and Multiple Intelligences	How to learn	Teach learning strategies, cooperation; activities vary according to different intelligences

Based on Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching (Oxford University Press)

MODERN TEACHING METHODS

As mentioned above, the modern language teacher doesn't follow one rigid method, but applies the Principled Eclecticism approach – fitting the method to the learner, not vice versa.

This means choosing the techniques and activities that are appropriate for each particular task, context and learner, with a focus on motivation and helping learners become independent and inspired to learn more.

There is not one single best method for everyone in all contexts, and that no one teaching method is inherently superior to the others. Also, it is not always possible – or appropriate – to apply the same methodology to all learners, who have different objectives, environments and learning needs. Applying the most appropriate method for that learner's specific objectives, learning style and context is more essential.

NEW TRENDS IN ENGLISH :LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

Language-learning computer programmes or apps are doing brilliant work. We've seen more and more language-learning apps such as Lingopolis or Olive Green. Another way is Digitalization that connects the learners with outside world. Students nowadays have access to an incredible amount of

English-language materials online. But students don't always know where to go for the most appropriate material. For teachers, the amount of time needed to find, select and prepare materials can be off-putting.

As a result, more and more sites that adapt materials for students are appearing. Easier English Wiki, for example, provides students and teachers with free materials based on articles from New Internationalist magazine. Newsmart, is an app that uses daily, up-to-date content from the Wall Street Journal to teach language and develop. Unlock is a new series from Cambridge University Press, which uses content from Discovery Education. Pearson's Speakout series a previous ELTon award winner has recently partnered up with the BBC. Dr Chris Lima's EAP Shakespeare materials, nominated for the Macmillan Award for New Talent in Writing, is also one such example.

Teachers have started to create materials in ways that would have been impossible some years ago. Language Lab and Smart Board also have a great repercussion on students. Nearly every student now carries a powerful mini-computer, video camera and audio recorder in their pocket (otherwise known as a mobile phone) and teachers are finding new ways to use this technology in the classroom for teaching English.

English is the language on which the sun does not set, whose users never sleep.
_ Randolph Quirk and H.G. Widdowson

CONCLUSION

Thus, we can see that the manageable stockpile of research has given place to a systematic storehouse of information. Researchers from all over the world are meeting, talking, comparing notes, and arriving at some explanations that give the story to past explanations. As Brown (2000: ix) notes, "Our research miscarriages are fewer as we have collectively learned how to conceive the right questions". Nothing is taken as gospel; nothing is thrown out of court without being put to the test. This "test" may always change its mechanics, but the fact remains that the changing winds and shifting sands of time and research are turning the desert into a longed-for oasis.

REFERENCES

1. Block, D., & Cameron, D. (Eds.). (2002). Globalization and language teaching. London, England: Routledge.
2. Brown, H. D. (2000). Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. New York: Longman.
3. Canagarajah, S. (1999). Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
4. Krishnaswamy,N & Krishnaswamy Lalitha.(2016). Methods of Teaching English. Trinity Press.
5. Wright, Wayne. (2010). Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners.