

Бекназарова Раушан Кадырбековна, магистрант II курса,
*Казахстанский инженерно-педагогический университет дружбы Народов,
г.Шымкент, Республика Казахстан*

Тастамбет Әсем Серікқызы, магистрант II курса
*Региональный социально-инновационный университет, г.Шымкент,
Республика Казахстан*

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS

The main purpose of this article is to provide a critical assessment of the role played by methods in the educational process, though there is also an account of the main different methods of foreign language teaching (FLT) that are in use today. A knowledge of the different methods gives foreign language teachers a good background reference to their own stand on pedagogical matters and classroom practice, and in addition helps them understand the process that FLT has undergone, particularly through this century. To consider FLT as a process means that teaching is not static but changing to respond to new needs and demands as teachers, applied linguists and educationists can prove. This article deals with the differences between approaches, methods and techniques, as well as the three major issues which are recurrent! in FLT. Then, the main characteristics, the psychological bases and the pedagogical features of the principal FLT methods are considered chronologically, presenting the contributions and imitations of the different approaches and methods. Finally, as a conclusion, a connection is established between FLT methods, innovation and classroom research, as a way of teacher development and of learning improvement.

1.1. Methods as part of a paradigm

Each of the main FLT methods that we present here was not superseded by a subsequent one as soon as it appeared but, rather, it went on living, the new one superimposing on the former. We can even say that the appearance of a new method corresponds with a loss of expectation of the former one along with the progressions of theory, research and the experience of school practice. There is not, broadly speaking, a marked line between different methods, but often an eclectic mixture between methods is present. In this sense methods are considered representations of language knowledge for pedagogical purposes and are part of a paradigm (a unit of theory, research and practice), which means a predominant way of building up theories, doing research and carrying out classroom activities. In fact, FLT methods have appeared as a result of the application of the new theoretical findings. Methods are also conditioned by educational philosophy, approaches about language nature and how it can be taught and learnt, and conceptions about classroom interaction. All this pervaded by those values concerning society and human relationships.

When these aspects start to change it can be said that a shift of model is taking place (Alcaraz 1990: 10-14).

1.2. The Traditional or Grammar-Translation Method

This method applied the study of Latin and Greek grammars to the study of foreign languages from the XVIIth to the XXth centuries. In the 19th century this method was rather widespread for learning foreign languages, though by the end of the century moves towards the Direct Method were noticed. Even today, in spite of its obsolescence, it has not entirely died out as some textbooks still in use and the practice of some classes are there to prove.

a) The principles of the Grammar-Translation Method.

The most relevant principles of this method can be summarized as follows (based on Larsen-Freeman 1986, and Richards and Rodgers 1986):

- 1) It emphasizes the study and translation of the written language, as it is considered superior to spoken language.
- 2) Successful learners are those who translate each language into the other, though they cannot communicate orally.
- 3) Reading and writing are the main language skills.
- 4) Teachers play an authoritarian role in the classroom and the predominant interaction is between teacher-student.
- 5) Students must learn grammatical rules overtly and deduce their applications to exercises.
- 6) Students have to know verb conjugations and other grammatical paradigms.
- 7) The basic unit of teaching is the sentence.
- 8) The student's native language is the medium of instruction and used as well to compare with the language studied.

b) The main techniques used by the Grammar-Translation Method.

The Grammar-Translation Method focuses on the teaching of the foreign language grammar through the presentation of rules together with some exceptions and lists of vocabulary translated into the mother tongue. Translation is considered its most important classroom activity.

The main procedure of an ordinary lesson followed this plan: a presentation of a grammatical rule, followed by a list of vocabulary and, finally, translation exercises from selected texts (Stern 1983: 453).

Other activities and procedures can be the following:

- reading comprehension questions about the text;
- students find antonyms and synonyms from words in the text;
- vocabulary is selected from the reading texts and it is memorized;
- sentences are formed with the new words;
- students recognize and memorize cognates and false cognates;
- fill-in-the-blank exercises;
- writing compositions from a given topic.

1.3. The structuralist methods

The different methods analyzed in this section share a common conception of how to learn a foreign language as a process of acquiring the structures or patterns of it through habit formation. We will examine the approach as well as the origins and the subsequent development of these methods: the Oral or Situational Approach and the Audio-lingual Method.

a) Approach: theory of language and learning

The theory of language underlying these methods is structural linguistics, and though there are some differences between British and American structuralism, both movements saw language as "a system of structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning, the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, structures, and sentence types" (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 49). Grammar no longer consists of a collection of rules, but a list of structures. Consequently, learning a language means mastering all these building blocks of the language and the rules to combine them. One of its main features is the importance given to the oral aspects of language, breaking with the relevance of the written language. In fact, these conceptions appeared to offer a scientific basis for FLT, which claimed to have transformed teaching from an art into a science. They are summarized in the following five ideas (quoted in Stern 1983: 158):

1. Language is speech.
2. A language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say.
3. Languages are different.
4. A language is a set of habits.
5. Teach the language, not about the language.

Both schools is based their theory of learning in behavioristic habit-forming conceptions. Behaviorism, an American school of psychology represented by

Skinner, had an ant mentalist and empirical approach to aspects of social life, like structuralism with regard to language. Behavior can be conditioned by three elements: a stimulus -which elicits a behavior-, a consequent response and a final reinforcement.

b) The Oral Approach.

The Oral Approach was the first move in what can be called structuralist direction and has its origin in the British applied linguistics of the 1920s and 1930s, represented by Palmer and Hornby. It was the first attempt to apply a scientific foundation to FLT and was dominant from the 1930s to the 1960\$. In the 1960s this approach was referred to as the Situational. Approach, due to a bigger emphasis on the presentation and practice of language situationally. The main difference with the American structuralism lies in the British notion of "situation" and purpose (rooted in Firth and Halliday's notions of meaning, context and situation), clarified by Pittman (cited by Richards and Rodgers 1986:35):

Our principal classroom activity in the teaching of English structure will be the oral practice of structures. This oral practice of controlled sentence patterns should be given in situations designed to give the greatest amount of practice in English speech to the pupil.

c) The Audio-lingual Method

The Audio-lingual Method corresponds with the USA structuralist tradition of FLT, which became the dominant orthodoxy after World War II. Its origin can go back to the seminal work of Bloomfield, who set up the bases of structural linguistics segmenting and classifying utterances into their phonological and grammatical constituents. Fries, Brooks, Rivers, and Lado went on applying these principles up to the 1970s with a close relationship with behaviorism. Bloomfield (1942) became a basic source for the Army Method, which was a response to the need of army personnel after the USA entry into the Second World War. Its main procedure was imitation and repetition.

d) Decline and assessment of structuralist methods

In the 1960S the structuralist methods were widespread, but those years saw as well the beginning of criticism from different sides: first, their ideas about language and learning theories were questioned; secondly, teachers did not fill their expectations, and, finally, students had a lot of difficulties to communicate outside the classroom and sometimes found the learning experience boring and discouraging.

REFERENES

1.Asher, James J. (1977) Learning Another Language Through Actions: The Complete Teachers' Guidebook. Los Gatos, California: Sky Oaks Productions.

2. Wilkins D.A. (1976) *Notional Syllabuses: A Taxonomy and Its Relevance to Foreign Language Curriculum Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
3. Gattegno, C. (1972) *Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools: The Silent Way*. 2nd ed. New York: Educational Solutions.
4. Elley, Warwick. 2001. Conclusion: What have we Learned? *International Journal of Educational Research* 35, pp.237-246.
5. Krashen, Stephen. 1989. We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the input hypothesis. *Modern Language Journal* 73:4, pp.440-64.
6. Maley, Alan. 1987. Poetry and song as effective language learning activities. In Wilga M. Rivers (ed.). 1987 *Interactive Language Teaching*, pp. 93-109. New York: Cambridge University Press.
7. Nagaraj, Geetha. *English Language Teaching Approaches, Methods, Techniques* II edition. Orient Black Swan Hyderabad 1996. Print.
8. Pandit, Kute and Suryawanshi. 1999. *Communicative Language Teaching In English*. Pune :NuntanPrakashan.