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В даній статті наводиться аналіз основних методів навчання іноземної мови, принципів, переваг та недоліків. Основна мета – оцінка ролі цих методів у навчальному процесі. Також стаття містить інформацію щодо методології як педагогічної категорії.

Данная статья является анализом основных методов преподавания иностранного языка, принципов, преимуществ и недостатков. Главная цель – оценка роли этих методов в процессе обучения. Кроме этого, статья затрагивает вопросы методологии как педагогической категории.

MAIN METHODS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

I would like to give a short overview of two main methods of foreign language teaching, their principles, advantages and disadvantages. The following methods have been analysed: Grammar-Translation Method and Audiolingual Method.

The main purpose of the article is to give critical assessment of the role played by methods in the educational process. 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 foreign language teaching has undergone.

The word “methodology” is itself often misinterpreted or ill-understood. It is usually given lip-service as an explanation for the way a given teacher goes about his/her teaching, a sort of umbrella-term to describe the job of teaching another language. Most often, methodology is understood to mean methods in a general sense, and in some cases it is even equated to specific teaching techniques. It should in fact mean and involve much more than that. I've found that Brown's definitions (reflecting

current usage at the time and drawn from earlier attempts to break down and classify elements to do with methodology) are the most useful:

methodology is the study of pedagogical practices in general including theoretical underpinnings and related research. Whatever considerations are involved in “how to teach” are methodological. Method is a generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives. Methods tend to be primarily concerned with teacher and student roles and behaviours and secondarily with such features as linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials [4, p. 5].

Within methodology a distinction is often made between methods and approaches, in which methods are held to be fixed teaching systems with prescribed techniques and practices, whereas approaches represent language teaching philosophies that can be interpreted and applied in a variety of different ways in the classroom. This distinction is probably most usefully seen as defining a continuum of entities ranging from highly prescribed methods to loosely described approaches [4, p. 14].

Let us take a look at methods as part of a paradigm or model of foreign language teaching (FLT). Each of the main FLT methods presented here was not superseded by subsequent one. 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 teaching 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 pace [1, pp. 10-14].

The Traditional or Grammar-Translation Method

This method applied the study of Latin and Greek grammars to the study of foreign language from the XVIIth to the XXth centuries. In the XIXth century this method was rather widespread for learning foreign languages, though by the end of the century moves towards the Direct Method were noticed.

The Principles of the Grammar-Translation Method.

The most relevant principles of this method can be summarised as follows:

- 1) It emphasises 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 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.

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 [3, p. 11].

The major disadvantages of the Grammar-Translation Method.

Retrospectively, there some very obvious disadvantages of this method, which are summarised next:

- 1) No account of present-day language usage is presented.
- 2) Secondary grammatical points, lists of forms and examples receive a lot of attention; some definitions and explanations are often incoherent because of their heterogeneous criteria. As a result facts about the language are confusing for the students.
- 3) It gives a predominant place to morphology but neglects syntax.
- 4) It gives an exaggerated importance to faults to be avoided by the learner and to exceptions, emphasising the prescriptive and mechanical aspect of language.
- 5) Translations are often unsatisfactory as they are done word by word.
- 6) Students have to learn a lot of grammatical terms and too much weight falls on their memories.

The Audiolingual Method

The Audiolingual Method corresponds with the USA structuralistic 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 basis of structural linguistics segmenting and classifying utterances into their phonological and grammatical constituents.

The most important assumptions about FLT in the Audiolingual Method are the following:

- 1) Foreign language is the same as any other kind of learning and can be explained by the same laws and principles.
- 2) Learning is the result of experience and is evident in changes in behaviour.
- 3) Foreign language learning is different from first language learning.
- 4) Foreign language learning is a process of habit formation.
- 5) Language learning proceeds by means of analogy rather than analysis.
- 6) Errors are to be avoided.

As a consequence from the assumptions considered above, the main procedures put into practice by Audiolingualism give a primary emphasis on an oral approach of FLT and focuses on an accurate speech, but grammatical explanations do not have an

important role. Teaching units are organised following these three methodological points [2, p. 4]:

Nothing will be spoken before it has been heard.

Nothing will be read before it has been spoken.

Nothing will be written before it has been read.

The major disadvantages of the Audiolingual Method.

- 1) Its description of the grammatical system rather incomplete.
- 2) It gives excessive weight to grammatical facts of secondary importance, and thus neglects important generalizations.
- 3) Slight treatment is given to syntactic relations.
- 4) It leaves teachers and learners without a creative approach towards the language study.

Some conclusions

I have considered just two main methods of FLT as models or paradigms of theory, research and practice. There are Situational Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching, Suggestopedia, Natural Approach, Total Physical Response and others. Some of them may be considered obsolete from a scientific point of view, some to be more current, but in fact all of them have introduced innovations at a given moment, superimposing on the former ones. However, all methods have at least two things in common: 1) their belief to be the best one, and 2) a set of prescriptions that teachers have to follow necessarily.

I think that teaching should be approached following a dynamic and reflective process which means a permanent interaction among the curriculum, teachers, students, activities, methodology and instructional materials.

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