

СЕКЦІЯ 1 «МЕТОДОЛОГІЯ, МЕТОДИКА ТА СУЧАСНІ ПІДХОДИ У ПРОЦЕСІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ»

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

Foreign language learning and teaching has played a dominant role in Ukraine's educational reform, especially in the present globalization of our society and economy. The need for improved foreign language learning and teaching methodologies has become apparent. But in order to select and implement optimal methods and techniques it is important to research and develop the existing ones.

Foreign language learning and teaching tradition has been subjected to a tremendous change throughout the twentieth century. There are a lot of approaches, methods and techniques in foreign language learning. Some of them have fallen into obscurity, others are widely used, still others have a small following, but offer useful insights.

One of the oldest is the Grammar Translation method which instructs students in grammar, and provides vocabulary with direct translations to memorize. It was the predominant method in Europe around the turn-of-the-century. It consisted mainly of exhaustive use of dictionaries, explanations of grammatical rules, some sample sentences, and exercise drills to practice new structures. Little opportunity for real foreign language acquisition existed then. Most teachers acknowledge that this method is ineffective, however, it remains the most commonly practiced method in some countries, for instance, in Japan.

Cognitive approach introduced the four principle language skills for the first time: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Oral communicative competence became the focus and speaking in the target language began to occur. But learning about the language was overemphasized.

The Audiolingual Method was known as the army method because it was developed for the military during World War II when it became known that there was a need for U.S. Army specialists to conduct conversation fluently in a variety of languages. It was very popular from the 1940s through 1960s. It is based on structural linguistics and

behavioristic psychology. It places heavy emphasis on spoken language stressing habit formation as a model of learning. A typical audiolingual method class consists of ten-minute drill periods, then the instructor examines grammar, this is followed by more drills. Target language vocabulary is introduced and learned in context, and teachers make abundant use of visual aids. Unfortunately most students cannot transfer the models and dialogues they learn into their real-life experience.

Another popular method is the Direct Method. It refrains from using the learners' native language and just uses the target language. It was developed as a reaction against the monotony and ineffectiveness of grammar-translation classes. It borrowed and applied Gouin's findings of the previous generation, seeking to imitate his naturalistic approach. It operates on the idea that foreign language learning must be an imitation of first language learning, as it is the natural way humans learn any language, that is, directly and without explanations of grammatical points and using only the target language. Reference to the mother tongue is discouraged. So the objective is speaking and listening comprehension, not translation. For this reason vocabulary is introduced in context and through demonstrations and pictures; and the emphasis is placed on correct usage and pronunciation. The method presents discussion in the target language as the major priority.

Nevertheless its intensity made the method impossible for public schools. In addition, it is considered a weak method because it is not supported by heavy-duty theories and it depends too much on teachers' ability to teach.

The Natural Approach was originally developed by Tracy Terrell and Stephen Krashen. This acquisition-focused approach sees communicative competence progressing through three stages: aural comprehension, early speech production, and speech activities, all fostering «natural» language acquisition. Following an initial «silent period», comprehension should precede production in speech, as the latter should be allowed to emerge in natural stages or progressions. Only the target language is used in class and errors in speech are not corrected aloud. A deliberate, conscious approach to the study of grammar is considered to have only modest value in the language learning process. The classroom becomes more student-centered with the teacher allowing the students to output the language more often on their own. Students are encouraged to express their thoughts, opinions, and feelings in the target language. Theoretically, in this way, students acquire language without effort.

Total Physical Response is an approach for learning foreign languages developed by James Asher. He reasoned that since children learning their native language listen more than they speak and often react physically to speech, foreign language learners might learn a target language in the same way. In this method, both language and body movements are synchronized through action responses and use of the direct commands. Students could absorb other linguistic forms, such as questions by watching and imitating the teacher. In these way, students magically begin asking questions and creating their own commands. Total Physical Response is very effective in teaching temporal states, personal pronouns, and other grammatical structures.

The Silent Way found its way into classrooms following the publication of Gattegno's text, also called the Silent Way. It rested on cognitive rather than affective arguments and was characterized by a problem solving approach to learning. Gattegno 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 and must disabuse himself of the tendency to explain everything to students. Brightly colored rods are integrated into this method for students to learn prepositions, colors, gender and number concepts, and to create multiple artificial settings through their physical placement. While the Silent Way encourages students to become active discoverers, it also leaves them to their limited communicative devices.

Suggestopedia is the method that promises great results if the students use their brain power and inner capacities. It is based on the efforts of Bulgarian medical doctor and psychology professor Georgi Lozanov and on his technique of superlearning. He believed that we are capable of learning much more than we think and came up with method for learning which used relaxation as a means of retaining knew knowledge and material. The Suggestopedia classroom used music — particularly Baroque music with its ideal sixty beats per minute to help soothe students as teachers employ various language-learning activities. In this classroom even adult learners are encouraged to behave as suggestible children. Imagery, music, suggestion, relaxation, comfortable armchairs, and dimlighting are the essential ingredients of this classroom. With soft music playing in the background, students role-play and learn vocabulary under the guidance of the all-powerful teacher.

Of course, suggestopedia offered valuable insights into the «superlearning» powers of our brain but it was demolished on several fronts. Certainly, this method can be practiced from time to time.

A relaxed mind is an open mind and it can help a student to feel more confident and, in a sense, pliable.

Community Language Learning was developed in 1972 by Charles Curran. This creative, dynamic approach to language learning was designed to ease the learner into gradual independence and self-confidence in the target language. Community Language Learning is more than a simple method, it is rather a veritable philosophy of learning which provides deep reflections on humankind. It encourages personal growth and self-development. The idea of this approach is to eliminate any sense of challenge or risk-taking from the students, which theoretically will free them to learn a foreign language without really trying. The teacher only gently facilitates all learning activity. It is inspired by the theory that human beings are often blocked by environmental and personal problems, but as soon as the problems are eliminated, the students can live up to their potential. In terms of a foreign language acquisition, certain factors may cause a mental block that prevents input (target language) from reaching the language acquisition device. Learning a language is not viewed as an individual accomplishment, but rather as a collective experience, something that should be disseminated out into the community at large at a later stage in the foreign-language acquisition process.

Total Immersion Language Learning method or Total Immersion technique was developed in 1960's by a set of school teachers for teaching Spanish to Mexican students. This generalized technique in foreign language learning «immerses» or «submerges» the students directly and immediately into the target language from the first opening day or hour of class. There are basically two types of this approach: a) effective; b) ineffective. An effective total immersion environment begins in hour one wherein the teacher speaks the foreign language slowly, clearly, and uses understandable words and phrases. These immediately recognizable words may differ only slightly in pronunciation or spelling from the student's native language. Hand gesticulation, various pictures and sometimes total physical response can facilitate such effectiveness. An ineffective total immersion technique occurs when the teacher starts the class by speaking at native speed. The students are being treated as if they were living in the country where the foreign language is predominant.

These techniques can be useful for students who are preparing for examinations and want to improve their speaking and listening skills. According to these techniques it is necessary: to spend at least 1-2 hours with a language teacher in a one to one contact class which increases students' interaction with a teacher; to make friendship with

native speakers and spend maximum time interacting with them to improve the accent and pronunciation; make a group with like minded friends to discuss various topics. This approach increases confidence in pronunciation, speaking and listening skills, which helps build a social foundation for grammar, reading, and writing.

Communicative Language Teaching, also known as the Communicative Approach is one of the most popular, particularly in Europe, where constructivist views on language learning in general dominate academic discourse. It is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching rather than a teaching method with a clearly defined set of classroom practices. The Communicative Approach emphasizes interaction as both the means and the goal of learning a language. Communicative competence is the desired goal of this approach. Unlike other methods of language learning and teaching it deals with the function of the languages in context both linguistic and social or situational. For language learning and teaching to be really communicative, it must not only be in context, but used to convey ideas, preferences, thoughts, feelings and information in a way that is addressed to reach others. In short, it seeks to recreate real-life social and functional competence. The linguistic accuracy that was deemed so essential in grammar-translation, the Direct Method, and other methods and approaches is a mere trifle in the Communicative classroom. Teachers avoid requiring students to identify or recognize nouns, verbs, or direct object; instead, they guide them to foreign language proficiency by employing «the three Ps» — presentation, practice and production (presenting the target language using everyday situation; practicing the language via situational dialogues, and stepping aside for students' production of the language).

There are some basic principles which make the communicative approach one of the most successful language learning approaches in use:

- a teacher is a facilitator and monitor in class;
- lessons are usually topic based;
- lessons are built round situations practical and authentic in the real world;
- emphasis is placed on engaging students in more useful and authentic language rather than grammar patterns;
- emphasis is put on meaning and the «appropriacy» of language;
- authentic texts are used very often;
- use of songs and games is encouraged;
- correction is usually given by the teacher after tasks have been completed rather than at the point of error.

It is important to remember that most of students do not learn a language in order to communicate, but they try to communicate, and in doing so, they learn. Although the Communicative Approach proved to be very efficient, it is not the panacea for foreign language learning and it is hardly the superway to linguistic competence or proficiency. As we see foreign language education has come a long way, and it has a long way to go. And we think that it is impossible to blindly adopt various, even the most successful theories. It is important to learn from our own experience and also to develop foreign language learning and teaching theories that innovate and promote our education system and research.

To our mind, the healthiest approach is the trend toward eclecticism for it accommodates various styles of learning and teaching. An eclectic approach allows teachers to take the most effective elements from many methods that really work in the classroom. The eclectic method uses the best that theorists have to offer and incorporates it with techniques that work.

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