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## Methodology on Language Teaching

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### Abstract:

The methodology on language teaching is a fundamental tool for teachers of foreign languages. School reality is hard, but throughout the development of several different methods; we have obtained optimal results regarding the teaching-learning languages process.

Key words: methods, languages, teaching, learning and teachers

On the daily experience of those who teach languages, it is common to search for an ideal method that is effective for the problems that all students face on different contexts. However, as Nunan (1991) says: it has been found that there is no ideal method, which is why it is recommended to every teacher to combine different techniques that have been developed, focusing on homework and classroom activities, considering the context and needs of all students.

Throughout the years, language teachers have used the following methods or approaches that have emerged regarding foreign language teaching: "The Grammar translation Method", "The Direct Method", "The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching", "The Audio-Lingual Method", "The Silent Way", "DeSuggestopedia", "Community Language

Learning”, “The Natural Approach”, “The Total Physical Response”, “Communicative Language Teaching”, “Content-based, Task-based and Participatory Approaches”, “Learning Strategies Training, Cooperative Learning and Multiple Intelligences”, and “Emerging Uses of Technology in Language Teaching and Learning”. Now we will briefly explain the main contributions of each author.

“The Grammar Translation Method” was the first method used by language teachers. This method, also known as the classic method, emerges for teaching Greek and Latin. According to Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011), “The Grammar Translation Method” came as a way for students to read and appreciate foreign literature through the study of grammar. Nonetheless, in this method reading comprehension was more important than oral expression, and for that reason between 1884 and 1924 “The Direct Method” was developed, thanks to the ideas of several teachers, especially the ones of L. Sauser, who argued that in order to learn a foreign language it is necessary to interact directly with the students by demonstrating and explaining the meaning of the target language without using a translation (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Between 1920 and 1930, “The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching” was developed by the Englishmen Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby, which was also used in the 60’s and 80’s. In contrast with the “Direct Method”, Palmer and Hornby tried to develop a method where there was not only a direct student-teacher interaction but also one where the students applied what they had learned with their classmates (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In the 50’s “The Audio-Lingual Method” was developed so the students could learn a language by repeating, practicing and memorizing more real life conversations. Behaviorism was applied in this method so the students could learn dialog structure through stimulus-response; this means students would learn when the teacher corrected them constantly, reinforcing their learning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). In order to not use more Behaviorism approach, in the 1970’s “The Silent Way Method” by Caleb Gattego, appeared, who declared that teaching meant to help the students in the learning process instead of trying to control it or dominate their learning. Students would learn to trust themselves and their classmates. The role of the teacher was to intervene as little as possible, therefore during class activities he would remain silent (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Also, the methods “Dessuggestopedia”, “Community Language Learning” and “Communicative Language Teaching” appeared during these years.

“DeSuggestopedia” was developed by Georgi Lozanov. In this method the teacher was aware of the psychological barriers the students brought with them to the classroom. Therefore, the teacher had to “desuggest” (eliminate) these barriers throughout activities, materials, and fun encouraging games (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011). On the other hand, the “Community Language Learning” was developed by Charles A. Curran, and in this method the teacher’s interaction with the student’s learning process was very important compared to the “Silent Way Method”. The objective of the “Community Language Learning” method was for students to reflect over their own learning and their classmate’s, in order to do so, during their communicating practice, students ought to respect the opinions and feelings of one another. In this environment of community the students felt comfortable and motivated to learn (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

“The Communicative Language Teaching” emerged thanks to the research of D. A. Wilkins among other members of the European Council. Although several methods that developed oral expression already existed, this method focused in the student’s ability to incorporate, in their speech, the language functions (to invite, to offer, to decline, to advise, etc.) by means of authentic materials (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; and Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Going back to the before mentioned methods, but leaving behind the “Grammar Translation Method”, their approaches were more and more going towards the development of oral expression, but this oral practice was missing outside the classroom; therefore in 1983 Tracy Terrel & Stephen Krashen came up with “The Natural Approach”, which proposed there should be an emphasis in real situation practices where the students were exposed to the target language (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Afterwards, language teachers combined “The Natural approach” with the “Total Physical Response Method (TPR)” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). “The TPR” is a method that uses speech and action, and its objective is to teach a language through physical activities. This listening comprehension method was developed by James Asher in 1969 (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Other methods that suggest communication as a main part of learning a second language, and currently used by many teachers are: “Content-based,” “task-based” and “Participatory Approaches”. The “Content-based” incorporates the second language learning, in the learning of another class subject. The “Task-based”, gives natural contexts to practice the

language, where students must work to accomplish a task by interacting with their classmates. And finally, the "Participatory Approaches", which they seeks to help students understand the social, historic and cultural forces that affect decision making and its participation in real life activities (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

On the other hand, there are "The Learning Strategies Training", "Cooperative Learning", "Multiple Intelligences" and "Emerging Uses of Technology in Language Teaching and Learning", which are important methods regarding language teaching. If students receive "Learning Strategies training", they will know all the techniques to practice and monitor their own speech and their classmate's. The process of "Cooperative Learning" involves learning through cooperative work. "The Multiple Intelligences" by Howard Gardner, contribute with teachers to recognize the student's abilities and based on that organize significant activities. And finally, "Emerging Uses of Technology in Language Teaching and Learning" gives teachers a variety of resources (audio, video, computer and the use of the Internet) to improve the student's performance in the language of study (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

In conclusion, the language teaching methods that have been developed throughout history have improved the study of language teaching. Each method was focused in overcoming the shortcomings of the former with the purpose of teaching students in a more practical way and to develop oral expression. In addition, every new method used certain techniques (cognitive, metacognitive, social, affective, of compensation and memorization) so students would learn significantly. Nowadays, and from personal experience, I can say that the most frequent methods that the teachers rely on to teach are: "Cooperative Learning", "Communicative Language Learning", "The TPR", "Desuggestopedia", "The Natural Approach" and "Emerging Uses of Technology in Language Teaching and Learning"; and within these, elements of the other methods presented in this essay are included, but they recuperate certain aspects that may fulfill the needs of students of these days. As we can see, in the beginnings of language teaching did not consider students as the main part of the learning process, but more as information receivers. Going back to what Nunan (1991) said, maybe there is no ideal method, but it is important to take the students and their context into consideration.

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