



Categorization of Foreign Language Teaching Approaches and Methods

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Abstract

This paper provides a comprehensible review of the nine foreign language teaching approaches and methods: Grammar Translation, Direct, Silent way, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response, Audiolingual methods, and Oral-Situational, Communicative language teaching, and Natural approaches. The study identifies specific characteristics of those nine approaches and methods thoroughly. The objective of the present study is to propose the categorization of FLT approaches and methods into six groups based on their distinctive features. Performing well in recognizing FLT approaches and methods and their peculiarities leads foreign language teachers to the capability of the teaching methodology.

Keywords: *Grammar Translation Method; Direct Method, Silent Way; Suggestopedia; Audiolingual Method; Oral-Situational Approach; Total Physical Response; Natural Approach; Communicative Language Teaching*

Introduction

Foreign language teaching never stays steady, there always be highs and lows. Even if several teaching methods and approaches appeared and afterward decreased in the usage, they are living still. Teaching approaches and methods play an important role and every foreign language teacher should know and implement them if necessary. Some methods aim to improve speaking skills, while others emphasize writing. Some of them consider accuracy is crucial in learning foreign language while others stress fluency in teaching language. The teachers and students' role also given disparate in different methods. For this reason, it is always interesting to research teaching methods and approaches, their purpose and distinctive features.

Literature review

Grammar Translation Method

Based on strategies and techniques of teaching traditional Latin language such as translating sentences from native language to target one or vice versa, learning by heart grammar rules and listed lexical items, GTM is developed (Howatt & Smith, 2014) to teach French, German, Italian and English language (Celce-Murcia, 2012) in the early years of 19th century. Writing and reading skills are emphasized in this method, while students speaking and listening skills are ignored to improve. Advocates of GTM think that to know language means to master target language grammar rules. Vocabulary is learned in order to support grammar and learned words are used in translation or doing grammatical exercises.

Direct Method

Gouin (1880) was the first scholar, who recommend this methodology of learning language because of his observations of child first language acquisition. According to Richards and Rodgers (2010), another scholar L. Sauveur, who supported the Direct method called it a Natural method and argued that second language ought to be taught only using the target language, explaining the concept with demonstration. Moreover, other scholars recommend principles of the Direct method. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) state “Teachers who use the Direct Method intend that students learn how to communicate in the target language.” (p.32). Thornbury (2006) also stated that in the Direct method, spoken language was prioritized.

Audiolingual Method

According to Brooks, we learn to speak before we learn to read or write, it has been maintained that the language what is spoken in the first instance and next what is written (1964). Since the speech was considered primary and secondary writing in this method, language teaching was presumed to concentrate on speech control and written suggestions were to be retained until reasonable delays in the process of language learning. As in the Audiolingual method foreign language is learned by repetition and drills, students can reach only beginner and elementary level, to be higher level of proficiency with the Audiolingual method is seen as an impossible task.

Oral-Situation Approach

This method aims to teach giving practical commands of four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Moreover, accuracy is essential in this approach, and learners are expected to avoid making mistakes. Like the other methods, specific features also characterize the Oral approach. Firstly, spoken language is prioritized; learners usually learn new material orally after that it can be presented in written form. Pittman (1963) argued, "Before our pupils read new structures and new vocabulary, we shall teach orally both the new structures and the new vocabulary." (p.186). When students have introduced reading and writing skills in the oral approach, vocabulary and grammar are also taught thoroughly.

Silent Way

According to the founder of the Silent method Caleb Gattegno (1972), the Silent way is the method that encourages students' autonomous learning, and teachers is not demanded to explain topics in a detailed way but stay silent as much as possible. In terms of the role of the teacher, he or she is a facilitator or technician during the lesson. The teacher should be as much as possible silent and intervene minimally in the lesson. Richards and Rodgers (2010) acclaim “The general objective of the Silent Way is to give beginning-level students oral and aural facility in basic elements of the target language.” (p.83). In the beginning stage of using the Silent way method, improving students' speaking skills and bank of vocabulary are considered as a priority. Afterward other skills: reading, listening, and writing, grammar is taught together in an integrated way.

Suggestopedia

The suggestion is regarded as a learning theory that supports Suggestopedia. In this theory, the teacher should have authority as teacher and students' relations compared to parent and child relation. Like a child, students learn the language with songs and games, and the teacher as a parent should create an atmosphere that is stress-free and full of fun. Richards and Rodgers (2010) state "The primary role of the teacher is to create situations in which the learner is most suggestible and then to present linguistic material in a way most likely to encourage positive reception and retention by the learner." (p.104). Native language is used actively in the Suggestopedia since lexical items are learned with their pairs in the native and target language (Richards and Rodgers, 2010). The aims of the Suggestopedia are "to deliver advanced conversational proficiency quickly" (Richards and Rodgers, 2010, p.102) and vocabulary and speaking communicatively are prioritized to teach (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Total Physical Response

In Total Physical Response, spoken discourse is combined with action. Students learn language through action-based activities, which is considered a stress-free way of learning (Krashen, 1981). Asher (1977) argues that "Most of the grammatical structure of the target language and hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned from the skillful use of the imperative by the instructor." (p.4). The role of the students is presenter and listener. Firstly, they should listen and understand their teachers' commands and then give a physical response. TPR is considered a teacher-fronted method, that is teachers always have to be active by giving a command or showing lexical item physically, monitor student's improvement of speaking skills, and giving feedback.

Natural Approach

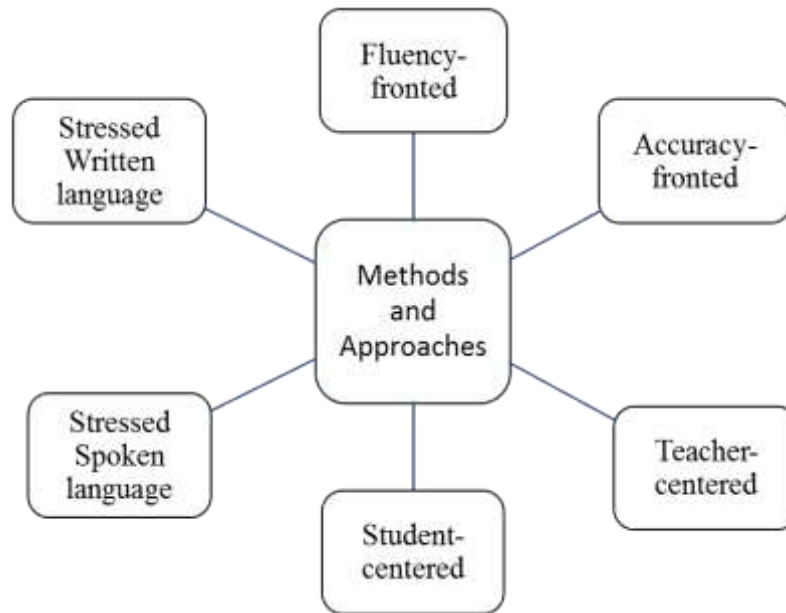
The distinctive feature of the Natural approach is prioritizing Input, language learners firstly should learn what and how to say before saying any lexical item. Firstly, listening and reading are focused, speaking appears later as a result of listening and reading authentic materials many times. Thornbury (2006) argues "Translation and grammar explanation were rejected, learners were exposed to sequences of actions, and the spoken form was taught before written form." (p.141). Terrell (1977) also says that grammar is less important than vocabulary, effectiveness of learning language is highly relied on knowing lexical items. At the beginning of the teaching process teachers' responsibility is high, while later students engage in lessons and demanded to be active more with obtained knowledge. According to Richards and Rodgers (2010), in the Natural approach fluency is considered as an essential by ignoring students' mistakes and "less focus on accurate production of target-language sentences (p.179).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT aims to teach how to communicate effectively integrating four major skills equally. CLT focused on student's autonomy of learning with minimal intervention from the teacher. The teacher as a facilitator should monitor the class, if there is a misunderstanding in the task and students did not solve it in many attempts then the teacher can guide them to reach the solution (Richard and Rodgers, 2010). Boyadzhieva (2014) acclaimed that usage of the native language is not prohibited, if necessary, it can be used in explaining grammar rules or giving the translation of the difficult concept. CLT is the most common approach in Foreign language teaching as it works on four skills equally and resulted that students can use of the language in the real world, outside the classroom.

Results and Discussion

Methods and approaches can be categorized differently based on their similar characteristics. Based on fluency and accuracy, activeness of teacher or students, and objected improvement of spoken or written language, those discussing nine methods and approaches can be categorized into six groups.



Fluency-fronted – this group includes methods and approaches that are aimed to improve fluency and do not stress correcting mistakes.

Accuracy-fronted – this type of method and approaches prioritize accuracy over fluency and can not tolerate making mistakes, teachers are demanded to correct their students’ mistakes immediately.

Teacher-centered – the methods and approaches that put much more responsibility on the teacher, who is considered as a source of knowledge and role model of language master.

Student-centered – opposite methods or approaches of teacher-centered, that emphasize the activeness of students in the learning process and autonomy of learning.

Stressed Spoken language – this group method stress teaching spoken language, how to communicate using the target language. These methods also consider teaching written language in order to support communication.

Stressed Written language – Methods and approaches that prefer teaching written language over spoken one. This category may involve methods, which shows as language masters, who know reading literature and writing in the target language. Speaking skills will appear in the next stages of the learning process simultaneously.

Categorization of Method and Approaches

Categorization of method and approaches	Methods and approaches
Fluency-fronted methods	Direct method Silent way Suggestopedia Natural approach Communicative approach
Accuracy-fronted methods	Grammar-translation Audiolingual Situational approach
Teacher-centered	Grammar-translation Direct method Audiolingual

Student-centered	Silent way Suggestopedia Situational approach Communicative approach Natural approach
Stressed spoken language	Direct method Silent way Suggestopedia Audiolingual Situational approach Communicative approach Natural approach
Stressed written language	Grammar-translation Communicative approach

Conclusion

To make lessons more interesting and interactive as well as not to be the same from the beginning till the end of the lesson, which is boring to students, foreign language teachers ought to be aware of every method and use it accordingly. Teaching methods and approaches is crucial, and every foreign language instructor should know their peculiarities of them to use appropriately. It can be concluded that the suggested categorization of methods and approaches in the article can be helpful for foreign language teachers in recognizing distinctive features and applying them in practice.

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