

CURRENT TRENDS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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Există numeroase metode de predare a limbii engleze, unele mai eficiente, altele mai puțin eficiente. Am constatat că diversificarea surselor de instruire presupune strategii moderne de dimensionare, structurare și predare a limbii engleze. Se impune o nouă modalitate de selecție a informației, descongestionarea acestora și alte criterii de predare-învățare a limbii engleze. Astăzi accentul se pune pe comunicare. Scopul comunicării în procesul de predare a limbii engleze poate varia: de la simpla transmitere și asimilare a informației la rezolvarea de probleme, formarea de capacități, convingeri, atitudini etc. În prezenta lucrare vom face o descriere a celor mai frecvent utilizate metode de predare a limbii engleze, precum ar fi: studiul de caz, învățarea limbii în comunitate, calea tăcerii, metoda audiolinguală etc. Desigur, selecția acestor metode este subiectivă, criteriile după care au fost alese fiind eficiența lor și gradul de popularitate. Analizând metodele specificate în studiul nostru, am ajuns la concluzia că metodele tradiționale încă mai coexistă cu cele moderne, o abordare eclectică fiind eficientă în predarea limbii engleze.

The field of language education is changing at an ever-increasing rate. Traditional notions of education are giving way to newer, more innovative ways of thinking about how we learn, teach and acquire knowledge. Today's tech-savvy students have a world of resources and information at their finger tips. Today's job market requires more than a knowledge of another language. In the twenty-first century, a comprehensive essential skill set is needed for employment. This includes competence in areas beyond languages such as:

- ✓ numeracy
- ✓ thinking skills
- ✓ computer use
- ✓ the ability to work well with others

There are ways to make learning languages fun or more enjoyable, but that does not mitigate the need for continuous and dedicated practice. Traditional, hierarchical and patriarchal attitudes are giving way to more collaborative approaches. Old, authoritative, "teacher-centred" or "expert-centred" approaches to teaching are as out as black and white televisions. Students do not care that their teachers have a big pile of corrections on their desk. Nor do they care that their teachers are overworked and underpaid, or that language programs are the underdog of the institution.

Projects that challenge students to reflect and ask how they themselves have grown and changed in positive ways are definitely in. The use of student *portfolios* is increasing in education in general. When it comes to demonstrations of learning, student portfolios are gaining popularity at a rapid pace. They are collaborative efforts between a student and a teacher that provide clear demonstrations of a student's progress and achievements. Students are guided by their teachers to develop their own portfolios over time. Student portfolios contain demonstrations of their knowledge and authentic language use. When it comes to demonstrations of learning, student portfolios are gaining popularity at a rapid pace. They are collaborative efforts between a student and a teacher that provide clear demonstrations of a student's progress and achievements.

Students are guided by their teachers to develop their own portfolios over time. Student portfolios contain demonstrations of their knowledge and authentic language use. Digital and multimedia projects offer evidence of their oral and listening competencies. More and more, electronic portfolios are being used. The beauty of the student portfolio is that the student owns it, not the teacher. There is a trend in language education overall to incorporate *student self-monitoring and self-assessment*. Portfolios are an excellent tool to teach learners how to self-monitor and evaluate, as well as providing them with provable demonstrations of their learning.

Another way of facilitating the English language acquisition is through problem solving activities and tasks which ensure learner participation and interaction.

The Highlights of this class are:

- To improvise the teaching methodology with new techniques in ELT.
- To handle tough students to improve their communication skills in a very easy manner.
- To make all the students to participate in the classroom with a lively environment.

- To implement the latest methodological trends in English language teaching to the native language speaking students.

McKay distinguishes the following methodological trends:

1. The grammar-translation method

The first method which we shall look at in this historical examination, which has prevailed a long time in the teaching of English and of other modern languages, is based on grammar and translation. It is a deductive, intellectual method, according to which the language is acquired by memorising the grammatical rules and paradigms and long lists of vocabulary, and is practised by the application of this knowledge in exercises of direct and inverse translations.

2. The direct methods

Once it was decided that when learning a foreign language, the objective should be the ability to communicate with speakers of that language, rather than just the ability to read literary works, the method using grammar and translation was seen as no longer serving a purpose, or could not at least be employed exclusively.

3. The structural or audio-lingual method

This method, also known as "linguistic", as it was the first to be consciously and intentionally based on a determined concept of language and its acquisition. This method began to invade the education system at all levels: university faculties, technical schools, secondary schools etc.

4. The cognitive approach

According to this approach, the learning of a language consists in acquiring a conscious control of its structures and its phonetic, lexical and grammatical elements, by means of, above all, the study and analysis of these structures, organised into coherent groups of knowledge. Once the student has reached a certain level of cognitive command of these elements, he will develop almost automatically the ability and capacity to use the language in realistic situations.

5. The communicative approach

These days, the methodological trend which appears to dominate the theories of language teaching and its teachers is the communicative, notional-functional approach. Rather than a new methodology, the communicative approach is a general philosophy which has been at the forefront of foreign language learning for the last 15 years. Its basic argument is that the learning of a foreign language should be directed towards the student acquiring communicative competence, that is to say, the acquirement of a series of skills which permit him to communicate with native speakers of the language in the most common situations of daily life [1, p.35-39].

According to Richards J., and Rodgers T., there are different approaches concerning methods of teaching English. They list the followings:

➤ **Scientific Approach:** improved methods of Teaching English are urgently needed as it is the language of modern technology, science, art, politics, medicine, etc. A systematic and scientific approach is required for its adequate teaching. It causes a lot of confusion if taught haphazardly; really a hard task to accomplish. Unless the teacher adopts befittingly structured and cautiously designed methods, ultimate success is unthinkable. Concerted efforts are needed to charter a well planned programme for the purpose [2, p.56].

➤ **Community Language Learning:** as the name indicates, this method follows a "humanistic" approach which was supported by *Charles A. Curran*, a specialist in counseling and a professor of psychology at Chicago University. His method is known as *Counseling-Learning*, and it redefines the roles of the teacher (counselor) and learners (the clients) in the language classroom. He developed a holistic approach to language learning, since human learning is both cognitive and affective. For him, learning takes place in a communicative situation where teachers and learners are involved in an interaction. One of its main tenets is for the student to develop his relationship with the teacher. This process is divided into five stages and compared to the ontogenetic development of the child. Thus, feelings of security are established; achievement of independence from the teacher; the learner starts speaking independently; a sense of criticism is developed; and finally, the learner improves style and knowledge of linguistic appropriateness [2, p.59].

➤ **Inculcating an attitude to learn:** modern trends of education regard the student as the center of all activities. Teacher strives hard to capture his interest and attention as these are vital to all efficient teaching. The success of the teacher does not lie in impressive teaching only rather depends upon the fact how far has he set the student exploring new horizons for himself. It is how to inculcate an attitude to learn; that is all important [2, p.62].

➤ **Learning by doing:** a lot of emphasis is laid on teaching the action verbs by actually performing the actions. The concepts thus formed sink deep into the mind and one tends to become what one does. Activity provides vividness to experience. For instance, when the students have just returned from the zoo, they would describe their experiences most enthusiastically. Likewise, they would write interestingly about a picnic party or a boating trip, immediately after having a trip. This is how learning process is accomplished by 'doing'. It improves vocabulary in general and action words in particular [2, p.65].

➤ **Functional Approach:** before the Functional Approach was taken into fashion, reading and writing were initiated with the letters of alphabets which are abstract to the students and is devoid of interest at all. The modern trend opines to establish the functional approach in the teaching of the both. It is necessitated to begin with the words of immediate interest to them and come from the range of their experience. They should also be provided with variety of exercises for the purpose to prepare them to read and write conveniently. The readiness tenure is considered to be a very significant one [2, p.68].

➤ **Audio- Visual Aids:** modern trend of Teaching English emphasizes a lot on the use of Audio-Visual aids to attract the interest of the students. These are considered to be an integral part of the Teaching of foreign language in the advanced countries. The exercise of pictures, films and lingua phone records infuses a new life in their bones. A teacher who is considerably dedicated to this work, taps up all possible sources to procure the required material. He harnesses the potentialities and capabilities of the students for the purpose [8, p.70].

➤ **Oral Work:** with a view to laying a concrete foundation in the teaching of English, oral work is highly recognized as the vital skill. It is crystal clear that the unerring language sense which is independent of all grammar, can only be cultivated by forming good speech habits. No syntax knowledge can be of any avail in this regard. Reading and writing are part and parcel of a language but speaking is the natural mode of expression. The traditional methods of teaching language are now considered to be vague ones rather modern trend is very much inclined towards oral practice [2, p.72].

➤ **Controlled Vocabulary:** a considerable inclination towards conversational approach, does not mean a haphazard presentation of new vocabulary and structures. An arrangement of oral work should be made that befits our conditions. The modern trend is in favour of teaching scientifically selected and suitably graded structures and vocabulary. The words of high frequency should precede those words which occur less frequently in the course of speaking and reading. The teacher should not impart everything whatsoever strikes his mind or comes his way. He should rather follow a carefully chartered programme and well-trying methods and principles of selection and gradation [2, p.75].

➤ **Play-way-Method:** the interest of the student is the main concern of the modern way of education. While learning through 'Play-Way-Method', he is less conscious of a sense of work, hence no feeling of tiresome, the better he learns. Play-Way-Method captures the attention of the student yielding remarkable results and feedback. Plays, dialogues, declamation contests, debates and competition of vocabulary tests stimulate the interest of the students in language learning [2, p.77].

➤ **Problem solving approach:** the way the modern trend fascinates the students, is throwing out a problem challenging the students to solve it. It targets at creating in them the habits of reflection and thinking [2, p.79].

➤ **Brain Storming:** is an advanced and modern teaching technique in which the teacher is not to be a full time participant or speaker rather provides opportunity to the students to guess or seek answers. Having given some clues, the teacher strives to elicit answers from them. Students guess the answers of the desired questions or the meanings of the new vocabulary using hit and trial method but the right answer is finalized by the teacher in the end. The method enhances the capabilities, potentialities and self confidence of the student [2, p.82].

➤ **The Silent Way:** It is a classroom technique wherein the teacher remains silent while students output the language through simulated experiences using tokens and picture charts as central elements. For instance, a color-coded phonics (sound) chart called a fidel, with both vowel and consonant clusters on it, is projected onto a screen to be used simultaneously with a pointer, thus permitting the pupil to output continually the target language in a sequence of phonemes. Brightly coloured rods are integrated into this method for students to learn spatial relationships, prepositions, colors, gender and number concepts, and to create multiple artificial settings through their physical placement. This method works effectively to promote small group

discussion. Students are encouraged to produce as much language as possible and to self-correct their pronunciation errors through manual gesticulation on the part of the instructor. The greatest strength of this method lies in its ability to draw students out orally, while the teacher listens. This inner criteria allow learners to monitor and self-correct their own production. It is here where this method differs notably from other ways of language learning [2, p.85].

The way of language learning by memorizing forms of verbs, nouns, adjectives, pronouns and grammatical rules is still being used today in formal classes in universities. But there are signs that this is not going to stay for long because of the recent new trends in language learning:

- For one, there are now many courses on language learning in the Internet, some of them are free, at least for the fundamentals. Of course these free courses have ads inserted here and there with options to upgrade for a cost. But if one is really interested and has the time and the Internet connection, language learning is no longer a big problem, unlike before where we have to pay tuition and miscellaneous fees to learn a language in university.

- Secondly, there are now video and audio lessons on language learning that can be accessed through the Internet. Before learners only had the textbooks and the dictionaries. They were never sure if their teacher pronounced the foreign words correctly since he or she was also not a native of that foreign language.

- Thirdly, students have now translations with the click of their computer mouse. This was unthinkable before. They have talking dictionaries and just by typing a word in English, choose the language they want a translation of this word in, and hit the return key and they hear the word in the other language. Apprentices learn languages through cell phones, mp3 players and other gadgets. They can have live online tutors with the use of Skype.

Hadley proposes five principles for proficiency-oriented teaching:

- ❖ Opportunities must be provided for students to practice using the language in a range of contexts likely to be encountered in the target culture.
- ❖ Opportunities should be provided for students to carry out a range of functions (tasks) necessary for dealing with others in the target culture.
- ❖ The development of accuracy should be encouraged in proficiency-oriented instruction. As learners produce language, various forms of instruction and evaluative feedback can be useful in facilitating the progression of their skills toward more precise and coherent language use.
- ❖ Instruction should be responsive to the affective as well as the cognitive needs of students, and their different personalities, preferences, and learning styles should be taken into account.
- ❖ Cultural understanding must be promoted in various ways so that students are sensitive to other cultures and prepared to live more harmoniously in the target language community [2, p.45].

After analyzing all the above mentioned methods and current trends, suggested by scientists we have concluded that the world is changing at a rapid pace. The process of teaching English is in a continuous change. Old, authoritarian models are giving way to gentler, more collaborative models.

Students are as hungry as they ever were to be guided, coached and mentored. Their curiosity about the world around them continues to be piqued. The difference now is that they have that world at their fingertips. They are experiencing the world through technology in a way that their parents and teachers never did. Today's language classroom is vastly different from that of the mid- to late twentieth century. The focus is no longer on grammar, memorization and learning from rote, but rather using language and cultural knowledge as a means to connect to others around the globe. Geographical and physical boundaries are being transcended by technology as students learn to reach out to the world around them, using their language and cultural skills to facilitate the connections they are eager to make. There is a case for a reconceptualized field that is more learner-centered, more collaborative and more technologically driven. The trends in language learning are moving us forward in such a way as to empower our students to communicate with others across the globe in real time.

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