



## METHODOLOGIES IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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### **Abstract**

*This paper seeks to explore the different Methodologies used in the Teaching of English Language. The purpose of every teaching methodology is to enhance the teaching/learning process thereby enabling teachers to work proficiently). Teaching therefore involves a continuous analysis of one's own work, the experiences of others and the search for new means to improve of improvement. This means that a teacher does not just set out to teach (English language for example), without taking into consideration certain basic factors. The paper examine the different teaching methodologies that may be employed in an English language classroom and these were presented in different modules. The study concluded that CLT seems to be a preferred choice in the Nigerian language classroom. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that despite its strengths over and above the other methods, all the other methods have their strengths which any innovative teacher can and should exploit in any teaching/learning situation.*

**Keywords:** *Methodologies, Grammar Translation, Bilingual Method*

### **Introduction**

A teaching methodology is the general plan made by the teacher for the successful presentation of a lesson. It usually involves specific approaches, different designs and procedures. Okueso (2016) asserts that the high rate of students' low performance in English Language is worrisome; this might be due to factors such as teachers' poor skills or archaic methods of teaching. The situation becomes worrisome on a daily basis, and thus requires urgent attention.

The purpose of every teaching methodology is to enhance the teaching process by "empowering and facilitating teachers to work proficiently (Tamura 2006: 169)". According

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to her, teaching involves a continuous analysis of one's own work, the experiences of others and the search for new means to improve teaching. This means that a teacher does not just set out to teach (English language for example), without taking into consideration certain basic factors. He/she must consider the nature of the language to be taught; is it a first, second or foreign language to the learners? Are there likely problems that the language may present to the learners? What content is relevant in that particular situation? In considering the teaching methodology to be employed, the teacher should also ask the following questions:

- a) What should I teach? (Content)
- b) What are my aims and objectives?
- c) How do I present my material?
- d) How can I evaluate my teaching objectives?

Subsequently, the teacher may proceed to choose the teaching methodology that best suits his purposes that would also help him achieve his teaching objectives for a particular lesson. We shall present the different teaching methodologies that may be employed in an English language classroom and these shall be presented in different modules.

**MODULE 1: The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM):** This is a cross-lingual teaching methodology which was developed around 1840 during the era of classical language studies and traditional Grammar. In Europe, around the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the learning of any foreign language tended to be associated with learning Latin and Greek and the aim at that time was to develop the speaker's intellectuality. Consequently, there was more emphasis on grammatical rules, syntax (word order or sentence structure), rote memorization of vocabulary and literary text translations. This was done to the total neglect of speech production and fluency. It is this classical methodology of teaching that transformed into what we know today as the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). GTM places much emphasis on the rules of grammar and translation from Li to the English language. Words are arranged in groups and presented to the learners who have to memorize the words, their meanings and memorize the grammatical rules that are applicable; Finally, learners are made to construct sentences based on what they had learnt.

### **Practical Application in the Classroom**

#### **TOPIC: PARTS OF SPEECH**

#### **Procedure: Step I: A List of Words is presented to Learners with their translations**

##### **Noun:**

Man: a male human (or Li equivalent)

Woman: a female human

Lawyer: one who speaks for people in a law court

**Teacher:** one who teaches in a school

Learners memorize these words and their meanings

**Step II: The Teacher presents the Grammatical Rule: The Noun is the name of a person, animal, place or thing.**

Learners repeat and memorize the rule.

**Step III: Teacher makes sentences with the new words and learners repeat after him/her.**

**Step IV: Learners do the exercises in their text books or write sentences using the new words.**

In GTM, inductive teaching is preferred and grammar is given more significance than the other areas of language study. The exercises in GTM place learners in a problem-solving situation, lists of vocabulary items are involved and translation exercises are produced from English to the mother tongue and sometimes from Li to English. The GTM has been one of the most popular teaching methodologies that have survived through the centuries and it is the one most commonly preferred and used in many Nigerian schools even today.

### **Disadvantages Of GTM**

1. Because the words are grouped and rules are memorized rigidly, language becomes artificial and learners are unable to experience the variety and fluency associated with spoken language.
2. Learners find the lesson boring because they have to memorize many rules and words.
3. Emphasis is more on reading and writing at the expense of spoken language.
4. Learners do not acquire proficiency and confidence in speaking.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:** Teachers should discuss GTM and its effectiveness in the Nigerian classroom. Is there need for a change in teaching methodology?

**GROUP PRESENTATION:** The group leader or secretary should present a summary of group discussion based on their experiences as teachers in an actual classroom.

### **Activity Teaching Practice**

Teachers should prepare and present lessons using the Grammar Translation Method.

### **The Series Method**

The last two decades of the 19th century was a period of new thinking when scholars had come to recognize the shortcomings of GTM. Notable among them was Francois Gouin, who in his book titled: “The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign languages,” described the terrible experiences he had to undergo learning German. Based on his experiences, and

carefully observing his three year old nephew who had very easily acquired mastery and fluency in French, he was able to develop a teaching methodology called the series method. The series method taught learners in direct ways a **series** of simple (easy to understand words). For example, series such as: I wake up in the morning. I say my prayers. I brush my teeth. I take a bath. I wear my school uniform. I eat my breakfast. I go to school. Another example is: I walk to the door. I stretch out my arm. I take hold of the handle. I move it downwards. I open the door. This **series** method was a sure improvement on GTM but it did not last long because, it was to give way to the Direct method.

**MODULE 2: The Direct Method (DM):** The direct method, also called the **natural method** was introduced by Charles Berlitz. This method grew in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Germany and France during the period when modern scholars had established the **reform movement** as a reaction against the traditional “old school” systems which had become unsatisfactory. Berlitz argued that there was a strong similarity between learning the first language and learning a second language and so, learning a second or foreign language should involve more interactive activities orally, spontaneous use of language, no translation and little or no grammatical or syntactic structure. DM emphasized that spoken language had to be acquired and that grammar was not the best means of teaching language. The main aim of DM is to immerse the learners in English, using realia, visual aids, demonstration and repetitive patterns. One of the proponents of this method was Harold F. Palmer (Tamura 2006:173). Significant principles of DM include:

- i) Abandonment of the Translation method; there is no mediation between MT and target language.
- ii) Oral skills are emphasized and developed through interactive exercises, question and answer sessions and intensive drills.
- iii) The main content of teaching language is the use of everyday vocabulary and structures.
- iv) Learners are encouraged to use the language of outside communication and everyday realistic situations.
- v) Second language is learnt naturally.
- vi) Word meanings are not given in both the L1 and L2. Meanings of concrete words are taught through a situational approach.
- vii) Meanings of abstract words are taught through association of ideas e.g. direct intuition, representation through drawings and pictures associated with the foreign word.
- viii) Oral and listening skills are emphasized.

- ix) Pronunciation skills are fundamental.
- x) Writing skills are secondary
- xi) Learners are encouraged to think in the target language.
- xii) Teach speech before reading and writing
- xiii) Teacher uses chain activities along with verbal comments, for example; I stand up, I go to my friend's seat, I shake my friend's hand, I return to my seat, I sit down.( this is referred to as the Gouin series).
- xiv) There is inductive teaching of grammar since learners are led to discover grammatical rules for themselves through the teachers presentation of relevant linguistic forms in the target language.
- xv) The syllabus is based on situations or topics and not necessarily on linguistic structures.

The main focus of DM is to enable students speak the target language or L2 fluently and correctly. The procedure is to present short texts to learners, explain difficult words to them not in L1 but L2, after which their comprehension level is tested through questioning. Learners learn the rules of grammar independently through their own personal efforts. Interactive exercises, drills, questions, dictation, free composition, pronunciation exercises are employed to develop language skills in this teaching methodology.

### **Teaching techniques**

- i. Read - aloud exercises
- ii. Question and answer sessions
- iii. Self-correction
- iv. Interactive! conversation practices
- v. Fill-in—the--blank spaces
- vi. Dictation exercises
- vii. Writing paragraphs

### **Stages in the DM Methodology**

**Step 1: introduction:** Teacher introduces new word or sentence.

#### **Stages**

- i. Show; teacher uses gestures to for explaining verbs or points to visual aid to ensure learners understand the topic.
- ii. Say; teacher carefully introduces the linguistic element using words, pronouncing the words clearly so that the learners can understand (enunciation)
- iii. Try; learners attempt to pronounce the new element.

- iv. Mold; teacher corrects learners where mistakes are made and models the language, pointing out the articulators involved in the production of word, shape of lips, tongue position, etc.
- v. Repeat; learners repeat the linguistic element as many times as possible until they have learnt the element. (possibly between 5 to 20 times).

**Step 2: Syntax; a syntactic description of linguistic element (its position in a sentence).**

- i. Say and repeat; teacher states a phrase or sentence and learners repeat as many times as possible
- ii. Question and answer in the negative; are you the governor or Rivers State? Students reply in the negative; No, No, I'm not.
- iii. Use of interrogatives or WH- Questions, using the 5 Ws (who, what, where, when, why?); there should be random practice.
- iv. Teacher introduces pronoun with verbs with the help of visual aids such as drawings, paintings, photos, illustrations and through the use of gestures. All pronouns must be taught and practice should be random involving all the pronouns. For example, Is she a man or a woman? Are they boys? Etc.
- v. Practice; let learners practice using appropriate pronouns to ask questions following the teacher's example.

**Step 3: Progressive learning from one new element to another one within the same lesson.**

This progression can be done through;

**A. Random Sequencing;**

- i. After the first linguistic element (X) has been learnt, teacher progresses to the next one (Y)
  - ii. When the second element (y) has been learnt, teacher goes back to the first (X) and revises both elements (X and Y).
  - iii. When the teacher has alternated between the two elements, he/ she proceeds to the third linguistic element. (that is, XY, YX, YY, etc. then Z)
  - iv. The teacher returns to X and Y again and then brings in Z as in (XYZ, ZYX, YYZ, etc.).
- Teacher continues to build in as many appropriate linguistic elements as possible within the same lesson according to the learning rates and levels of the learners. Teacher must practice all the combinations as many times as possible until comprehension has taken place.

**B. Teacher should abide by student-led limits**

- i. Teacher must carefully observe and identify students' mental saturation points to guide him! her as to when to stop introducing new linguistic elements.

ii. When saturation points have been attained, teacher begins a review of lesson.

C. Lesson Review: use random and arbitrary sequencing of the items already taught, use visual aids and different examples of the elements that are simple to enhance understanding. Teacher may change the names of objects, people, towns and countries already used in the main lesson. Teacher should note and preserve a list of items taught for proper assessment of learner outcome.

D. Special Attention List; teacher should observe and keep records of linguistic items most difficult to the learners to enable him/her address them accordingly.

E. Progression from Lesson to Lesson

i. Lesson Review; teachers should spend the first few minutes of each lesson reviewing the previous lesson to provide a proper background and foundation for the new lesson

ii. Comprehensive Review; the teacher should progress from the lesson review to more comprehensive review of an entire topic or an entire lesson. This is where the teacher takes care of the items in the Special attention List.

### **WEAKNESSES**

i) The DM requires fluency in Li

ii) It possessed techniques and procedures that may present difficulties to teachers.

iii) Teachers may experience difficulty explaining difficult words.

iv) Non-availability of time to exhaust the processes required.

v) Recorded more success in private schools than in public schools.

**TEAM WORK:** Teachers pair up and discuss the teaching method and its effective employment in the Nigerian classroom.

**CLASS PRESENTATION/TEACHING PRACTICE:** Team mates should practice teaching using DM to highlight its strengths and weaknesses, after which teachers organize themselves to have micro-teaching sessions.

### **MODULES 3: THE BILINGUAL METHOD**

This method combines the Direct Translation Method and the Direct Method in its processes. The bilingual method was introduced and developed by C. 3. Dadson and uses both Li and L2 in the classroom. The procedures involved are:

i) Teacher reads out a text to learners who close their books.

ii) Learners open their books as teacher does second reading. Learners repeat the lines after the teacher.

iii) Teacher provides meaning equivalents of the sentences or clauses.

iv) Teacher says each of the sentences with their Li equivalents twice. For example;

Teacher: Boma killed a rat

Teacher: Boma Obori bam (teacher gives Li version)

Boma Ofunguru bam

Boma Gburu Oke

Boma Gburu Ikereku/Oke

Teacher: Boma killed a rat

Teacher: Tells students to repeat sentences.

#### **WEAKNESSES:**

Teacher must be fluent in both Li and L2

Makes students dependent on MT

More focus on grammatical structures instead of normal day to day use of language.

It is not based on any formal theory.

**TEACHER INVOLVEMENT:** Teachers brainstorm on the bilingual method and its applicability to the Nigerian learning environment.

**MICRO- TEACHING SESSION:** Teachers practice the bilingual method.

#### **MODULE 4: THE STRUCTURAL-ORAL-SITUATIONAL APPROACH (SOS) TO LEARNING**

This teaching methodology came to be recognized sometime in the 1950 and until 1990, it was practiced in schools in South India. It has the following principles:

- i) The four language skills are presented in a particular order: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW).
- ii) Learning a language involves learning both the words and syntax of that language.
- iii) Teaching and learning must be fun.
- iv) Teaching language can be done through demonstration.
- v) Abstract words and ideas should be taught through association.
- vi) Emphasis is on sentence patterns since they can become the basis for a language course.
- vii) Vocabulary should be presented according to the different grades.
- viii) Learner's competence in L2 structure must be developed.

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION IN CLASS:** The teaching of language structure:

Uses of used to . . . (to express past habits)

Uses of so . . . that . .

Uses of the comparative adjective

Adjective + er + than + noun/pronoun +v

Example: He is bigger than I am.

## **WEAKNESSES**

- The situations presented in class are not real-life situations.
- Some difficulty may be encountered explaining abstract words/ideas.
- More successful/effective at the primary school level.
- May be ineffective and inadequate in a normal teaching/learning situation.

**TEACHER PARTICIPATION:** Teachers discuss the teaching methodology and how it can be applied in the Nigerian learning environment.

## **MICRO TEACHING SESSION:**

Teachers practice the SOS teaching method.

## **MODULE 5: MODERN APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE TEACHING**

A term used to describe more current trends in language teaching is “Communicative Language Teaching” (CLT). The teaching methodology was proposed in Europe in 1972 and since then it has spread to other parts of the world. In this teaching methodology, more emphasis is placed on the learner’s ability to communicate effectively in the language than on his/her theoretical knowledge of the structures of language. CLT has been in use since the 1970s and it has been in operation in diverse forms in language teaching today.

CLT adopts an eclectic approach to teaching. Being learner-centered, it usually employs different classroom activities such as group work, pair-work, games, role play, and other interactive/question and answers sessions. It aims at producing communicative competence in learners and all the language skills are concentrated on in each lesson. The following principles guide the CLT methodology:

- i) The learner is an active participant in the learning and teaching process. Based on this, teachers are expected to concentrate on issues such as: learner motivation, learner needs and learning styles. He/she should anticipate problems and possible solutions.

### **Discussion**

- Motivation
  - Learner needs
  - Learning styles
- ii) The teacher should concentrate on actual communication in the classroom
    - Reduce TTT (Teacher Talk Time) and increase STT (Student Talk Time).
    - Involve learners in communicative activities. Fluency is achieved when learners are encouraged to use the language and not learn about the language. Encourage the following interactive patterns T-S, S-T, S-S, SS-SS, SSS, whole class, individuals (see Hyacinth 2006).

iii) Emphasis should be placed on functions of language use in situations of clarification, greetings, apologizing, inviting, refusing, etc. There should be focus on the contextual uses of language and on issues of appropriacy and different levels of formality (formal, informal, semi-formal or neutrality).

iv) Focus on forms of language.

Semantics (meaning in the target language)

Grammar (parts of speech, tense, vocabulary, etc.)

Phonology

v) Expose learners to the use of the language through modeling, presenting new language and grading language

Encourage learners to use the target language through both controlled activities and freer activities.

Use appropriate texts Authentic materials Listening activities

vi) Recommended presentation techniques are:

Presentation Practice and Production (PPP)

Language from a text

Teach, Test, Teach (TTT) Task based learning

vii) The teacher is an enabler;

- Has a friendly personality
- Personalizes the learning process
- Motivates learners by encouraging praise
- Knows learners' names
- Creates a learner-centered classroom
- Creates a suitable learning environment
- There is clarity of instructions
- Provides variety in interaction
- Produces a variety of activities

In the CLT learning environment, learning is task-based and learners are introduced to different tasks and problem solving situations. It is not solely dependent on any set of textbooks. The main aim here is to develop in the learner's communicative competence in that he/she understands and expresses himself/herself in the target language successfully. However it is pertinent to review the criticism of some of these methods, as no particular one is most preferred but depending on the context in which its being used, as learners differ one from another. Okueso, Oosikomaiya, Osijo, Omotayo, and Arowole (2018) in their study

revealed that the teachers in Ogun State are not significantly knowledgeable on the use of communication package in the teaching of English language. Hence, there is need to retrain teachers with communication package in order to enhance their method of teaching English Language. Also in the same vein, Akujobi and Chukwu (2012) asserted that the disadvantage of these methods where English Language is taught by communication is that students are forced to communicate haphazardly. This results in inaccurate fluency. The method did not take into consideration that a learner already possesses a language and he might transfer this native tongue habits into the foreign language. This method usually requires that a teacher be fluent in the target language.

**DISCUSSION:** The trainee-teachers should discuss CLT and the other teaching methodologies, stating their preferences.

**ACTIVITY:** Teachers should write a note of lesson in English adopting any teaching methodology of their choice.

### **Teaching Practice Sessions**

#### **Conclusion**

We have considered different language teaching methodologies and have seen their strengths and weaknesses. Based on our discussion in the preceding sections, we may be tempted to conclude that CLT seems to be a preferred choice in the Nigerian language classroom. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that despite its strengths over and above the other methods, all the other methods have their strengths which any innovative teacher can and should exploit in any teaching situation. Different methods may be appropriate to different contexts and learners differ one from another.

Consequently, we shall not recommend any one single method. The teacher should master the different teaching techniques and apply any method more relevant to his/her classroom situation. Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure that his/her teaching objectives are achieved in every given teaching/ learning situation.

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