

МЕТОДИКА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ

(английский язык)

History of English Teaching Methodology

Language teaching has been around for many centuries, and over the centuries, it has changed. Various influences have affected language teaching. Reasons for learning language have been different in different periods. In some eras, languages were mainly taught for the purpose of reading. In others, it was taught mainly to people who needed to use it orally. These differences influenced how language was taught in various periods. Also, theories about the nature of language and the nature of learning have changed. However, many of the current issues in language teaching have been considered off and on throughout history.

Ancient Times

The history of the consideration of foreign language teaching goes back at least to the ancient Greeks. They were interested in what they could learn about the mind and the will through language learning. The Romans were probably the first to study a foreign language formally. They studied Greek, taught by Greek tutors and slaves. Their approach was less philosophical and more practical than that of the Greeks.

Europe in Early Modern Times

In Europe before the 16th century, much of the language teaching involved teaching Latin to priests. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, French was a lingua franca for speaking to foreigners. Members of the court spoke French, of course, but it was also a necessary language for travelers, traders, and soldiers. French was fairly widely taught during this period, and a study of the theoretical books and language textbooks from this period indicate that many of the same questions that are being considered today by language teachers were

being considered then. These included questions about practice versus learning rules and formal study versus informal use.

The status of Latin changed during this period from a living language that learners needed to be able to read, write in, and speak, to a dead language which was studied as an intellectual exercise. The analysis of the grammar and rhetoric of Classical Latin became the model language teaching between the 17th and 19th centuries, a time when thought about language teaching crystalized in Europe. Emphasis was on learning grammar rules and vocabulary by rote, translations, and practice in writing sample sentences. The sentences that were translated or written by the students were examples of grammatical points and usually had little relationship to the real world. This method came to be known as the grammar-translation method. Though some people tried to challenge this type of language education, it was difficult to overcome the attitude that Classical Latin (and to a lesser extent Greek) was the most ideal language and the way it was taught was the model for the way language should be taught. When modern languages were taught as part of the curriculum, beginning in the 18th century, they were generally taught using the same method as Latin.

The Grammar-Translation Method

The grammar-translation method was the dominant foreign language teaching method in Europe from the 1840s to the 1940s, and a version of it continues to be widely used in some parts of the world, even today. However, even as early as the mid-19th, theorists were beginning to question the principles behind the grammar-translation method. Changes were beginning to take place. There was a greater demand for ability to speak foreign languages, and various reformers began reconsidering the nature of language and of learning. Among these reformers were two Frenchmen, C. Marcel and F. Gouin, and an Englishman, T. Pendergast. Through their separate observations, they concluded that the way that children learned language was relevant to how

adults should learn language. Marcel emphasized the importance of understanding meaning in language learning. Pendergast proposed the first structural syllabus. He proposed arranging grammatical structures so that the easiest were taught first. Gouin believed that children learned language through using language for a sequence of related actions. He emphasized presenting each item in context and using gestures to supplement verbal meaning.

Though the ideas of these and other reformers had some influence for a time, they did not become widespread or last long. They were outside of the established educational circles, and the networks of conferences and journals which exist today did not exist then to spread their ideas.

Reforms

However, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, linguists became interested in the problem of the best way to teach languages. These reformers, who included Henry Sweet of England, Wilhelm Viëtor of Germany, and Paul Passy of France, believed that language teaching should be based on scientific knowledge about language, that it should begin with speaking and expand to other skills, that words and sentences should be presented in context, that grammar should be taught inductively, and that translation should, for the most part, be avoided. These ideas spread, and were consolidated in what became known as the Direct Method, the first of the "natural methods." The Direct Method became popular in language schools, but it was not very practical with larger classes or in public schools.

Behaviorism and Language Teaching

Developments in other fields have, at times, had an effect on language teaching. In the field of psychology, behaviorism has had a great effect on language teaching. Various scientists in the early to mid-1900s did experiments with animals, trying to understand how animals learned, and through animals, how humans learned.

One of the most famous of these scientists was Ivan Pavlov. His experiments showed that if he rang a bell before giving food to the dogs he was studying, when the dogs heard the bell, they would salivate, even before the food was presented to them. This is called a conditioned response. Pavlov believed that this indicated that this is how animals learned, even in the wild. Pavlov and other studying in fields of animal behavior (including John Watson and B.F. Skinner) came to believe that animal behavior was formed by a series of rewards or punishments. Skinner, in particular, promoted the idea that human behavior could be described using the same model.

In applying his principles to language, Skinner theorized that parents or other caretakers hear a child say something that sounds like a word in their language, they reward the child with praise and attention. The child repeats words and combinations of words that are praised and thus learns language.

Behaviorism, along with applied linguistics, which developed detailed descriptions of the differences between languages, had a great influence on language teaching. Theorists believed that languages were made up of a series of habits, and that if learners could develop all these habits, they would speak the language well. Also, they believed that a contrastive analysis of languages would be invaluable in teaching languages, because points in which the languages were similar would be easy for students, but points in which they were different would be difficult for students. From these theories arose the audio-lingual method. The audio-lingual method is based on using drills for the formation of good language habits. Students are given a stimulus, which they respond to. If their response is correct, it is rewarded, so the habit will be formed; if it is incorrect, it is corrected, so that it will be suppressed.

The Mid- to Late-20th Century

In the years following World War II, great changes took place, some of which would eventually influence language teaching and learning. Language diversity greatly increased, so that there were more languages to learn.

Expansion of schooling meant that language learning was no longer the prerogative of the elite but something that was necessary for a widening range of people. More opportunities for international travel and business and international social and cultural exchanges increased the need for language learning. As a result, renewed attempts were made in the 1950s and 1960s to 1) use new technology (e.g., tape recorders, radios, TV, and computers) effectively in language teaching, 2) explore new educational patterns (e.g., bilingual education, individualized instruction, and immersion programs), and 3) establish methodological innovations (e.g., the audio-lingual method). However, the hoped-for increase in the effectiveness of language education did not materialize, and some of the theoretical underpinnings of the developments were called into question.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, there has been a variety of theoretical challenges to the audio-lingual method. Linguist Noam Chomsky challenged the behaviorist model of language learning. He proposed a theory called Transformational Generative Grammar, according to which learners do not acquire an endless list of rules but limited set of transformations which can be used over and over again. For example, a sentence is changed from an affirmative to a negative sentence by adding not and the auxiliary verb to, i.e., "I go to New York every week" would be changed to "I do not go to New York every week." With a fairly limited number of these transformations, according to Chomsky, language users can form an unlimited number of sentences.

Other theorists have also proposed ideas that have influenced language teaching. Stephen Krashen, for example, studied the way that children learn language and applied it to adult language learning. He proposed the Input Hypothesis, which states that language is acquired by using comprehensible input (the language that one hears in the environment) which is slightly beyond the learner's present proficiency. Learners use the comprehensible input to deduce rules. Krashen's views on language teaching have given rise to a number of changes in language teaching, including a de-emphasis on the

teaching of grammatical rules and a greater emphasis on trying to teach language to adults in the way that children learn language. While Krashen's theories are not universally accepted, they have had an influence.

Developments in various directions have taken place since the early 1970s. There has been developments such as a great emphasis on individualized instruction, more humanistic approaches to language learning, a greater focus on the learner, and greater emphasis on development of communicate, as opposed to merely linguistic, competence. Some "new methods," including the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, and Community Language Learning, have gained followings, and these reflect some of the above trends. In addition, there has been a disillusionment with the whole methods debate, partly due to inconclusiveness of research on methods, and calls for a deeper understanding of the process of language learning itself. Finally, there has been a greater stress on authenticity in language learning, meaning that the activities involved in language learning reflect real-world uses of the language.

Conclusion

Over the centuries, many changes have taken place in language learning, and yet there is evidence that considerations related to language learning have come up again and again through history. No doubt the search for a greater understanding of language learning, and more effective language teaching, will continue.