

METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AND EASY WAYS TO LEARN ENGLISH

Ramazonov Shohruh Nusratillo o'g'li

Termez state university

ABSTRACT

A language teaching method is a single set of procedures which teachers are to follow in the classroom. Methods are usually based on a set of beliefs about the nature of language and learning.' (Noonan, 2003, p. 5). Ask teachers what method they subscribe to, and most will answer either that they don't follow a method at all, or that they are 'eclectic', and pick and choose from techniques and procedures associated with a variety of different methods. Some might add that, essentially, their teaching follows the principles laid down by the communicative approach, itself a mixed bag, embracing anything from drills to communicative tasks, and everything in between. But the concept of a single, prescriptive 'method' - as in the Direct Method, or the Oral Method - seems now to be dead and buried.

Keywords: method, learners, instructional materials.

INTRODUCTION

Even a cursory glance at their content and at the way they are marketed confirms the fact that the writers and publishers of coursebooks take particular positions, either explicitly or implicitly, with regard to each of these areas. The theory of language that coursebooks instantiate, for example, is clear from their content pages, where language is typically construed as a system of 'accumulated entities' (Rutherford, 1987), or what I have referred to elsewhere as grammar McNuggets. As Basturkmen (1999) concluded, after reviewing the cover blurbs of a number of current coursebooks, 'the emphasis [is] on the underlying generative base or language rules rather than on surface level aspects of use' (p. 34). Coursebooks and second language learning The 'nature of second language learning', as evidenced from coursebooks, seems generally to follow a cognitive model, where declarative knowledge is proceduralized through successive practice activities. The back cover of Inside Out (Kay and Jones, 2001), for example, makes the claim that 'easy-to-use exercises put rules into practice – and are then recycled as speaking activities'. As for 'the goals and objectives of language learning', these tend to be loosely aligned with those of the communicative approach.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Inside Out, for example, ‘has been designed to develop real-life communicative skills and powers of self-expression’ (Kay and Jones, op. cit), while Cutting Edge (Cunningham and Moor, 1998) aims at ‘improved confidence and fluency’ as well as ‘a clearer understanding of how language is used’. (There is, of course, no recognition that the discrete-item focus of the syllabus might be at odds with these more holistic objectives.) With regard to the syllabus, the grammar ‘canon’ predominates, but the influence of the lexical approach (Lewis, 1993) and of corpus linguistics is now apparent. Innovations (Dellar and Hocking, 2000) ‘has a strongly lexical syllabus, presenting and practicing hundreds of natural expressions which students will find immediately useful’, and Natural English (Gairns and Redman, 2002a) offers ‘a new syllabus area called natural English – accessible, high-frequency phrases which intermediate students can pick up and use’.

ANALYSIS RESULTS

The ‘role of teachers, learners and instructional materials’ is most clearly demonstrated in the Teacher’s Book component, where the teacher’s role is both didactic and facilitative, and serves primarily to mediate the coursebook materials, by, for example, explaining, demonstrating and modeling language items, and by setting up and monitoring student interactions. For example (from Gairns and Redman, 2002b): Once learners have thought about exercise 1, go over the language in the natural English box. You could model the phrases and replies yourself and ask learners to repeat them, then practice the two-line dialogues across the class’ (p. 24). The guidelines typically construe the teacher as the locus of control in the classroom and even at times imply that the learners are potentially disruptive: ‘Don’t let the false beginners dominate the real beginners or pull you along too quickly... Encourage [the false beginners] to concentrate on areas where they can improve (e.g. pronunciation) and don’t let them think they know it all!’ [Oxenden and Seligson, 1996, p. 15] Nevertheless, occasional reference is made to the need to encourage learner agency and autonomy. For example, ‘Choices within tasks encourage learners to take charge of interactions’ (Kay and Jones, op. cit). Unsurprisingly, though, the coursebook forms the core component of instruction: it is both the medium and the message.

CONCLUSIONS

Here, then, are the ingredients of a method, enshrined in a method. Teachers who claim not to be following a method, but who are using a coursebook, are as much method-bound as the Direct Method practitioners of Berlitz’s day, or the Audiolingualists of Lado’s. Of course, teachers will argue that they use coursebooks selectively, in accordance with their own principles as well as the needs of the learners. Fair enough, but however selective a teacher is, he or she is still tied to a theory of

language, embodied in the way that the course selects and describes language, and to a theory of learning, as manifested in the way the course prioritizes certain types of activity over others.

REFERENCES:

1. Cunningham, S. and Moor, P. (1998) Cutting Edge: Intermediate. Student's Book. Harlow: Longman.
2. Dellar, H. and Hocking, D. (2000) Innovations. Hove: LTP.
3. Gairns, R. and Redman, S. (2002a) Natural English: Intermediate. Student's Book. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. Gairns, R. and Redman, S. (2002b) Natural English: Intermediate. Teacher's Book. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. Gray, J. (2002). The global coursebook in English Language Teaching. In Block, D., and Cameron, D. (Eds). Globalization and language teaching. London: Routledge.