THE ANECDOTAL COILS AND ERRATIC POLISHES OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ELT in India is effervescent and full of life today. The milieu of the intact teaching archetype has changed absolutely. As will become obvious in this petite paper, there are some milestones in the growth of the tradition of ELT, which will briefly be pat upon, in an effort to disclose the significance of research in the selection and implementation of the most favorable methods and techniques for language teaching and learning.

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Introduction

As the title entails, the English language teaching tradition has been subjected to a remarkable change, especially all through the twentieth century. Conceivably more than any other discipline, this tradition has been experienced, in an assortment of adaptations, in language classrooms all around the world for centuries. While the teaching of Maths or Physics, that is, the methodology of teaching Maths or Physics, has, to a greater or lesser extent, linger the same, this is scarcely the case with English or language teaching in broad-spectrum.

The Classical Method

In the Western world back in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, foreign language learning was allied with the learning of Latin and Greek, both supposed to endorse their speakers' intellectuality. At the time, it was of crucial significance to spotlight on grammatical rules, syntactic structures, along with rote memorisation of vocabulary and translation of literary texts. There was no stipulation for the oral use of the languages under study; finally, both Latin and Greek were not being taught for oral communication but for the sake of their speakers' becoming "scholarly" or generating an illusion of "erudition." Late in the nineteenth century, the Classical Method came to be known as the Grammar Translation Method, which offered extremely little afar an insight into the grammatical rules attending the process of translating from the second to the native language.

It is far and wide acknowledged that the Grammar Translation Method is still one of the most admired and preferred models of language teaching, which has been rather brawny and impermeable to educational reforms, remaining a standard

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and sine qua non methodology. With retrospection, we could say that its contribution to language learning has been deplorably limited, since it has shifted the focus from the authentic language to a "dissected body" of nouns, adjectives, and prepositions, doing nothing to augment a student's communicative ability in the foreign language.

Gouin and Berlitz - The Direct Method

The last two decades of the nineteenth century steered in a new age. In his The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign Languages (1880), Francois Gouin exemplified his "harrowing" experience of learning German, which helped him increase insights into the ins and outs of language teaching and learning. Breathing in Hamburg for one year, he endeavored to master the German language by dint of memorising a German grammar book and a catalog of the 248 irregular German verbs, as an alternative of conversing with the natives. Reveling in the security that the grounding in German grammar offered him, he accelerated to walk off to the University to test his knowledge but didn't find any benefit. He could not understand a word! After his failure, he determined to memorise the German roots, but with no success. He went so far as to memorise books, translate Goethe and Schiller, and learns by heart 30,000 words in a dictionary, only to meet with disappointment. Upon returning to France, Gouin discovered that his three-year-old nephew had managed to become a chatterbox of French - a truth that made him suppose that the child held the clandestine to learning a language. Thus, he started scrutinizing his nephew and came to the conclusion that language learning is a stuff of transforming perceptions into conceptions and then using language to stand for these conceptions. Equipped with this knowledge, he formulated a teaching method premised upon these insights. It was against this setting that the Series Method was created, which taught learners directly a "series" of connected sentences that are painless to understand. For instance,

I stretch out my arm. I take hold of the handle. I turn the handle. I open the door. I pull the door.

Nevertheless, this approach to language learning was ephemeral and, only a generation afterward, gave place to the Direct Method, posited by Charles Berlitz. The basic principle of Berlitz's method was that second language learning is akin to first language learning. In this luminosity, there should be heaps of oral interaction, impulsive use of the language, no translation, and little if any analysis of grammatical rules and syntactic structures. In short, the principles of the Direct Method were as follows:

- Classroom instruction was conducted in the target language
- There was an inductive approach to grammar
- Only everyday vocabulary was taught

- Concrete vocabulary was taught through pictures and objects, while abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas

The Direct Method enjoyed grand recognition at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth but it was complex to use, mainly because of the constrictions of budget, time, and classroom size. Yet, after a period of decline, this method has been invigorated, leading to the emergence of the Audio Lingual Method.

The Audio Lingual Method

The flare-up of World War II heightened the need for Americans to become orally proficient in the languages of their associates and foes alike. To this end, bits and pieces of the Direct Method were appropriated in order to form and hold up this new method, the "Army Method," which came to be known in the 1950s as the Audio Lingual Method.

The Audio Lingual Method was based on linguistic and psychological theory and one of its main grounds was the scientific evocative analysis of a broad hodgepodge of languages. On the other hand, conditioning and habit-formation models of learning put onward by behaviouristic psychologists were married with the pattern practices of the Audio Lingual Method. The following points sum up the characteristics of the method:

- Dependence on mimicry and memorisation of set phrases

- Teaching structural patterns by means of repetitive drills

- No grammatical explanation

- Learning vocabulary in context

- Use of tapes and visual aids

- Focus on pronunciation

- Immediate reinforcement of correct responses

But its standing waned after 1964, partly because of Wilga Rivers's revelation of its inadequacies. It fell short of promoting communicative ability as it paid unwarranted concentration to memorisation and drilling, while downgrading the role of context and world knowledge in language learning. After all, it was discovered that language was not acquired through a process of habit formation and errors were not necessarily awful or destructive.

The "Designer" Methods of the 1970s

The Chomskyan revolution in linguistics drew the concentration of linguists and language teachers to the "deep structure" of language, while psychologists took account of the affective and interpersonal nature of learning. As a result, new methods were proposed, which attempted to capitalize on the significance of

psychological factors in language learning. David Nunan (1989: 97) referred to these methods as "designer" methods, on the grounds that they took a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Let us have a look at two of these "designer" methods.

Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia promised huge results if we make use of our brain power and inner capacities. Lozanov (1979) believed that we are proficient of learning much more than we imagine. Drawing upon Soviet psychological research on yoga and extrasensory perception, he came up with a method for learning that used relaxation as a means of retaining fresh knowledge and material. It stands to reason that music played a key role in his method. Lozanov and his followers tried to present vocabulary, readings, role-plays and drama with classical music in the background and students sitting in contented seats. In this way, students became "suggestible."

Certainly, suggestopedia offered precious insights into the "superlearning" powers of our brain but it was demolished on several fronts. For example, what happens if our classrooms are bereft of such facilities as comfortable seats and Compact Disk players? Certainly, this method is insightful and constructive and can be experienced from time to time, without necessarily having to stick to all its premises. A relaxed mind is an open mind and it can help a student to feel more confident and, in a sense, malleable.

The Silent Way

The Silent Way rested on cognitive rather than affective arguments, and was characterized by a problem-solving approach to learning. Gattegno (1972) held that it is in learners' finest interests to widen independence and autonomy and cooperate with each other in deciphering language problems. The teacher is supposed to be silent - therefore the name of the method - and must disabuse himself of the propensity to elucidate everything to them.

The Silent Way came in for an ambush of criticism. More explicitly, it was considered very callous, as the teacher was distant and, in common lines, the classroom environment was not favorable to learning.

Strategies-based instruction

The work of O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and others before and after them, highlighted the significance of style awareness and strategy development in ensuring mastery of a foreign language. In this seam, many textbooks and complete syllabi offered guidelines on constructing strategy-building activities. Below there is an example of a list of the "Ten Commandments" for good language learning (taken from Brown, H. D. [2000: 137]):

	Teacher's Version	Learner's Version
1	Lower inhibitions	Fear not!
2	Encourage risk-taking	Dive in
3	Build self-confidence	Believe in yourself
4	Develop intrinsic motivation	Seize the day
5	Engage in cooperative learning	Love thy neighbour
6	Use right-brain processes	Get the BIG picture
7	Promote ambiguity tolerance	Cope with the chaos
8	Practice intuition	Go with your hunches
9	Process error feedback	Make mistakes work FOR you
10	Set personal goals	Set your own goals

These suggestions cum injunctions are able to sensitize learners to the weight of attaining autonomy that is, taking charge of their own learning, and not expecting the teacher to get across everything to them.

Communicative Language Teaching

The need for communication has been persistent, leading to the emergence of the Communicative Language Teaching. Having defined and redefined the build of communicative competence; having explored the vast collection of functions of language that learners are supposed to be able to achieve; and having probed the nature of styles and nonverbal communication, teachers and researchers are now better equipped to teach (about) communication through real communication, not simply theorizing about it.

At this point, we should say that Communicative Language Teaching is not a method; it is an approach, which surpasses the boundaries of concrete methods and, concomitantly, techniques. It is a theoretical position on the subject of the nature of language and language learning and teaching.

Let us see the basic premises of this approach:
- Focus on all of the components of communicative competence, not only grammatical or linguistic competence ?h Engaging learners in the pragmatic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes
- Viewing fluency and accuracy as complementary principles underpinning communicative techniques
- Using the language in unrehearsed contexts

Conclusion

From all the above we can see that the handy build up stocks of research of just a few decades ago has given place to a systematic warehouse of information. Researchers, the world over, are gathering, discussing, comparing notes, and arriving at various explanations that give recline to long-ago explanations. As Brown (2000: ix) notes, "Our research miscarriages are fewer as we have collectively

learned how to conceive the right questions". Zilch is taken as gospel; not anything is thrown out of court devoid of being put to the test. This "test" may always change its mechanics, but the fact remains that the anecdotal coils and erratic polishes of time and research are turning the barren region into a refreshing sanctuary.

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