

8. Психолого-педагогический словарь для учителей и руководителей общеразвивающих учреждений/ Авт.-сост. В.А. Межериков; Под ред. П. И. Пидкасистого. Ростов н/Д, 1998.

Summary

Studying Latin language at the present stage may qualitatively enhance one of the fundamental components of multicultural education - its cultural paradigm. Texts and excerpts from the works of ancient authors proposed to read during Latin language classes in universities and high schools, are an important source of knowledge of cultural values of the ancient world and common cultural values. Culturological comments on the texts, either spoken, or through use of computer equipment, can contribute to a more subtle and profound understanding of history and culture of the ancient world. The article presents a research on the opportunity to transform the process of reading and studying of specially selected Latin texts to a studying of the ancient (Greek and Roman) literature and culture in general.

ON THE ALLEGED IMPRACTICALITY OF THE GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD IN ADULT LEARNERS

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The current deluge of methods and techniques used in ELT is staggering. It appears that with each new method introduced, the time required for learning a new foreign language is getting shorter and shorter. Being sceptical, this tendency is nowhere near the truth.

According to Cook (2003: 34) the most influential methods and approaches throughout the history of ELT were the following: the grammar-translation method, the direct method, the natural approach and the communicative approach; each of them representing a stage within the development of language teaching.

The oldest and also claimed to be the most obsolete method, namely, the grammar-translation method is closely related to teaching and learning classical languages, i.e. Greek and Roman. It was connected with frequent reading and translating of classical works with focus on form and accuracy. Students were presented with new patterns of grammar and subsequently encouraged to practice them in controlled exercises.

In reply to this method, the direct method, among lay people also known as Berlitz method, has evolved. It relies heavily on the foreign language. Teachers are prohibited to use other languages than the target one. Students are presented with actual examples of

the studied language and they are supposed to induce the rules for themselves by themselves solely.

The natural approach utilises the findings from the field of psycholinguistics, so the learner has to go through the process of not learning but acquiring the foreign language similarly to the way a young child does. His/her being exposed to the target language should help him/her induce grammatical rules along with remembering and activating new vocabulary.

The final communicative approach seemed to revolutionise teaching foreign languages, particularly English. It prefers function to form. Students are thus taught several grammatical structures apt for individual communicative situations, e.g. to give advice: *Why don't you buy a new car? You should buy a new car. Buy a new car.*

Even within the communicative approach, there are various methods employed which are selected upon the initial examination of the composition of the group taught and the initial assessment of the learners' needs. The entire process is contingent upon the desired outcome of a course. For majority of students, it is the native-like mastery of English; nonetheless, there is a considerable number of students whose objective it is to master English solely on the level required for their job.

As pointed out by Straková (2004: 9), there are numerous factors affecting the teaching process on the side of the learner (age, motivation, beliefs, intelligence, aptitude, personality, style) and on the side of the teacher (personality, beliefs, style, education, motivation). Apart from these factors, there are clearly, also other factors affecting the teaching process. For the purposes of this work, we will draw our attention particularly to the factors on the learner's side, namely, age and beliefs.

To proceed further, we need to specify more closely the representative group. Our group comprises middle-aged learners who as yet have not learnt English. They do not expect to attain C2 level but would like to achieve B2 level later on, so they need more than just a few phrases a typical tourist would get by with. Due to the last condition we would exclude the Berlitz method which is quite popular with lay people who expect to learn how to react to certain stimuli, such as being asked to order in a restaurant by a waiter and knowing how to successfully be given what you want. Our students are highly motivated and are the product of the former socialist school system in former Czechoslovakia.

Since their previous learning experiences are as described above, they have quite concrete expectations of the oncoming classes. The imprint of the former era is indelible. At that time, there was only one textbook which complied with standardised criteria. The structure of the textbook was nearly the same in all units departing from the grammar-translation method. First an article or an excerpt from a book, afterwards a presentation of some new grammatical structure followed by exercises focused on this particular phenomenon. As a result, even today when learning new foreign language they expect the teacher to follow the "traditional" pattern. They will incessantly insist on translating every single sentence that occurs anywhere although they are told not to "bother" with the verbatim translation, for it is not important for them to understand the complete form but to understand the meaning that the author is trying to convey.

Contemporary orthodox methodologists and applied linguists must be appalled by such teaching practice. However, it must not necessarily be completely flawed. Students at elementary level tend to speak “Slov-English”, i.e. they employ English lexis but do not adhere to the SVO paradigm and use the Slovak word order instead, or render the meaning of fixed expressions into the target language verbatim. For instance, *Do práce som včera nešiel.* – *To work I did not go yesterday.*; *V chladničke nie sú žiadne paradajky.* – *In the fridge are no tomatoes,* or *ako psí ňufák* – *as a dog’s muzzle* (instead of “*to be a cold fish*”). Thus the Slovak and English equivalents juxtaposed might help them visualise the alterations in the syntactic structure or lexis that the original (source) sentence had to undergo and help them pinpoint the mistakes usually made by beginners.

Efficiency of the teaching process is one of the most significant factors contributing to the selection of the method used. Envisage explaining abstract nouns like *slavery*, *integrity* or *justice*. Profuse explanations would be rather time-consuming and might be misconstrued and, unfortunately, abstract nouns cannot be shown or pointed at. Therefore, the best viable solution is to use mother tongue equivalents which are lucid, concise and readily available.

Furthermore, there is the morphological viewpoint. We may take the differences between present simple tense and present continuous (progressive) tense. A simple “*What do you do?*” if compared with “*What are you doing?*” may be the source of troubles to beginners. Again, a quick translation may solve the students’ conundrum: “*Aké je tvoje povolanie?*” and “*Čo robíš?*”.

To conclude, we are not trying to undermine or confound the current methods in ELT, but rather to enhance the efficiency of the teaching process, ease the route of students to the mastery of English and avoid having to go through lengthy explanations of new grammatical structures. Our proposal is to use translation where appropriate. It is helpful during all PPP stages of your lessons, be it presentation, practice or production. It can definitely improve the comprehension of new structures or lexis. Tailor-made sentences which the students would have to translate are thus an aid to practice exactly the properties of language that the teacher wants them to.

The grammar-translation method as a whole is nowadays obsolete, but why not to utilise some of its features that may prove useful when the core of this method is still wanted by certain students who cannot imagine studying foreign language without translation present during the classes.

Literature

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Summary

The grammar-translation method is for many teachers a matter of the past. However, not all students must incline to the contemporary teaching methods. The teaching process should stem from the students' needs analysis; hence, the reoccurrence of the grammar-translation method may be called upon. It will definitely not form the core of the language course, but it may serve as a booster for the efficiency of the teaching process and it will meet the expectations of some students.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF THE BRITISH SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

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19th century Great Britain was literally 'great'. Its political and economical power as well as its strong cultural influence was global having spread from Canada to Australia and from Scotland to South Africa. We can address this era – the sixty-three-year-long reign of Queen Victoria – the golden age of the United Kingdom.

Victorian society was founded on those thoughts, which had been formulated a hundred years earlier during the revolutionary times of Europe initiating the enlightenment era. 'Ratio' was the strongest tool as well as the most frightening weapon in the hands of the man. The world was logical and understandable. The once divine laws and principles seemed to be possible to decipher by means of mathematics, and sciences. New discoveries and inventions provided effective tools for new conquests. International trade and capital accumulation offered new possibilities and a new philosophical apparatus was born – mercantilism. It was a logical world where the strong, successful and clever had a chance for adventure; could become rich and bring the state even more glory. The Victorian era was the time when the basics of our modern society were formed and established. The huge and fast economic development inspired new reactions. This was the time when the rural British society had transformed into an urban one. Agglomerations developed and the rural population migrated to the new cities. The farmers changed into workers. In this world, where masses of people were often managed through written orders and descriptions, was inevitable that education had to become accessible for a wider range of society.

The situation before 1880, before the year when the first law came into force about general education, was different and clearly reflected the traditional British attitude – which has been based on freedom of the individual. Primarily clerical institutions provided basic education. Local patriots, educated protagonists of the community and wealthy patrons supported the local schools. Regular school activities were supplemented by Sunday school activities, which had strong religious character –