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METHODS AND APPROACHES IN ENGLISH TEACHING PRACTICE

Abstract: *The article gives a quick look at teaching practice, methods and approaches are used at the lessons of the English language. The data analyzed were gathered from the three lessons which were carefully observed by the teacher herself and her colleagues. The article touches upon the fields of interaction patterns, dealing with errors and range of tasks done at the lesson.*

Key words: *activities, classroom, observation, assignment, lesson, teaching practice, gestures, errors, students, materials.*

Language: English

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I explain and analyze the range of activity types I use at my lessons, the way I deal with spoken errors of my students and the range of interaction patterns I use in my classes. These three areas of focus were chosen on the basis of personal interest and that all these three comprise the essential ingredients (basis) of language teaching. I am going to relate my analysis to the methods and approaches I use and explain their underlying thinking giving references to the literature I have read. The assignment will contain a brief reflection on my preparing and carrying through this assignment.

The data for my analysis was derived from the three lessons I have taught recently and has been collected from the observation notes of my colleague, my own filled notes and feedback from the students. All three lessons are devoted to the topic of breakthroughs of the twentieth century in science. The first lesson dealt with introducing and practicing new vocabulary in context on the topic. In the second lesson the students worked with the text concerning the advances in modern science and did the comprehension tasks. Examples of my activity types can be found in the appendix. In the third lesson the group was asked to express and share their opinions and thoughts about the most significant and the least important breakthroughs of the 20th century science.

To collect the information for this assignment I used three sources of data collection. They are my

colleague observation of my three lessons, my own field-notes and the questionnaire which the students completed after the three lessons I conducted.

Based on the results of the data collected of the range of activities I use at the lessons, it is obvious that I try to employ different tasks and activities to cater for the students' different learning styles and learning preferences. According to Ur "Practice is the activity through which language skills and knowledge are consolidated and mastered." Therefore it is important for me to use a wide range of tasks to help the students reach their main target in the English language learning. Analyzing the data of my own field-notes and my colleague's observation sheet I can point out that my warming-up activities and leads-in depend on the topic of my lesson and the objective of the lesson. However all they are to give students an opportunity to practice their speaking skills and provide them with the chance to be involved into the lesson. All this proves that I use the elements of the Communicative Language Teaching whose goal as Diane Larsen-Freeman suggests is "...to enable students to communicate in the target language."

The people I teach are the students of the Physics faculty so one of their main goals in learning the English language is to be able to translate scientific articles. Such articles contain sophisticated grammar structures and specific vocabulary. Consequently the students do different kinds of



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vocabulary and grammar exercises like matching words to their definitions, filling the gaps with the correct word or a grammar structure and many others. It goes to Grammar-Translation Methods. As Diane Larsen-Freeman assumes in her book "Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching "...a fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to read literature written in the target language". To do it students need to learn grammar rules, huge blocks of lexical units of the target language. At this point of my essay I would like to point out that I am influenced a lot by this method because of the tendency of teaching in my country as many teachers follow this method still nowadays and I used it a lot at my lessons.

It is noticeable that my teaching practice was influenced by some other methods. For instance to correct some of my students' mistakes, I use gestures. I use my fingers to indicate that a student has missed some word in the structure of the sentence. Moreover when teaching pronunciation, I always indicate stress on words with my fingers or a clap. These all techniques come from the method which has a name "The Silent Way". Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers in their book "Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching" state that this method "...is based on the premise that the teacher should be silent as much as possible in the classroom but the learner should be encouraged to produce as much language as possible". I give my students an opportunity to find and correct their mistakes themselves without my help. More often I encourage my students to do peer correction which makes them be more attentive and careful while listening to their fellow-students. To bring some diversity in my lessons I sometimes conduct them as a small play with music, different objects to give my students a chance to learn something new and relax at the same time. Such technique has its roots in the method which is called Suggestopedia. It is generally considered that this method was developed by the Bulgarian psychiatrist Georgi Lozanov in 1970.

Bearing in mind the previous point, I should say that the Communicative Language Teaching approach has had a great impact on my teaching practice since my CELTA course. The principal characteristics of this method are that authentic materials are used at the lessons; communication is carried out through the interaction in the target language, activities in the classroom should be connected to those outdoors, the importance of learners' personal experience. (Diane Larsen-Freeman, 2000). I try to give more speaking activities for my students at the lessons for the students to be able to come over the "language barrier", not to be afraid to express their opinions, ideas, thoughts and beliefs in the target language. I always encourage my students to speak freely, to say

what they think on this or that topic. It is important to note that I give my students both individual work and pair or group work where they are to discuss some things or share their opinion on this or that topic. To make my lesson more interactive for the students I can organize so called "round tables" or "debates" where students discuss some crucial issues or try to oppose their opinions to each other.

In ELT interaction patterns are the different ways learners and the teacher can interact in the class. Using the right interaction pattern is a fundamental factor in the success of any activity and the achievement of aims.

Different interaction patterns can support the aims of different kinds of activities. For example, if the learners are doing group writing then small Ss-Ss groups are best, but for elicitation of ideas the interaction pattern could be Ss-T. Changing interaction patterns can help vary the pace and choosing an appropriate pattern can help achieve learning aims, for example, making learners take the place of the teacher (S-Ss) can be very productive.

The data gathered in the interaction patterns used at the lessons suggests that the students are involved in many different forms of interaction patterns. They are group work when students work in small groups fulfilling the task the teacher gives them. The role of the teacher is just going around and listening to the ideas and thoughts of the students. It goes to Communicative Language Teaching where the main role of a teacher is to facilitate and monitor the students' performance (Diane Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Moreover such interaction patterns as individual work, collaboration and full-class interaction [6, c.156]. The most frequently used patterns are individual work and collaboration when the students first work on their own on the given task and then discuss or do the task together with a partner. While students are involved into these two interaction patterns, the role of the teacher is the same as in Communicative Language Teaching. The frequent application of individual work interaction pattern at my lessons is predicted mostly by Grammar Translation Method which implicates students individual work on texts, comprehension exercises. Analyzing the data my colleague provided it can be pointed out that "full - class interaction pattern" [6, c.156] is used as often as the previous ones. This one is employed more often at the beginning of the lesson as a warming - up activity to allow students get involved into the topic of the lesson. Here again the influence of the Communicative Language Teaching can be seen.

To summarise, in this assignment, by analyzing my whole teaching experience I had the chance to look at the development and changing of my views, opinions and beliefs on my teaching. I can say that I was influenced by different methods and approaches and the way my teachers who taught me as well. It is

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important to say that there is no one universal approach or method for me to use at my lessons. My own teaching is a combination of various techniques

which eventually allows me to reach my main goal which is to make my students able to communicate in the English language.

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