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özcan demirel

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Özcan DEMİREL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY

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Yayınevi 0312 430 67 50 - 430 67 51

Yayınevi Belgeç: 0312 435 44 60

Dağıtım: 0312 434 54 24 - 434 54 08

Dağıtım Belgeç: 0312 431 37 38

Hazırlık Kursları: 0312 419 05 60

E-ileti: pegem@pegem.net

PREFACE

As a course book “English Language Teaching -ELT- Methodolgy” was primarily prepared to train prospective teachers of English. However, teachers of English can also utilize this book while teaching and planning their classroom activities.

The procedures and techniques in the book are intended to help the teacher organize and conduct teaching activities effectively. For this reason, there are some specific examples for different learning situations. We hope these specific examples will clarify our general approach. We believe that a good teacher of English should be aware of contemporary language teaching methods and techniques used in classroom situations. A good teacher should also be able to adopt and transfer the new techniques to different learning situations.

The first chapter focuses on language, language acquisition and principles on language learning. The second chapter focuses on language teaching approaches, methods and techniques used in the foreing language classroom up to the present. The subsequent chapters focus on the four basic language skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing. The last chapters deal with the new trends in language teaching, planning of teaching activities, guiding how to prepare the sample daily lesson plans and suggesting extra-curricular activities.

The author wishes to thank most warmly his colleagues and students who have contributed to the development of the book through their discussion and demonstration. He especially thanks his new daughter, Didem, who patiently typed most of the book and his sons, Hakan and Okan, who technically designed and computerized the book, and also his wife Nursel, who enthusiastically supported him in every respect and finally Sabri Koç, who patiently went through the book and helped in every stage in making the printing of the book possible.

The author will be very happy if the teachers of English find the book useful and practical in their teaching activities.

Özcan Demirel
Ankara, 1992

To HAKAN, DİDEM and OKAN

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Chapter 1

LANGUAGE, LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING*

Language is a very complex phenomenon, and it cannot yet be fully accounted for by anyone within one wholly consistent and comprehensive theory.

If we teach language, the way we approach our task will be influenced, or even determined, by what we believe language to be, by the particular informal theory or theories we have about it.

Is language a tool?

skill?

habit?

behaviour?

machine that works?

living thing?

We just have to admit that language is such a complex phenomenon that no one viewpoint can see it as a whole. The question we really need to ask is not which view is 'right', but which view is 'useful', which view is relevant to language teaching.

Language teaching is an art in that it is a highly skilled activity which is learned by careful observation and patient practice. However, language teaching is a science. Linguistics provides a growing body of scientific knowledge about language which can guide the activity of the language teacher. There can be no systematic improvement in language teaching without reference to the knowledge about language which linguistics gives us.

As Sezer (1986) points out, linguistics, like all the other sciences, studies

* This chapter was adopted from Ayhan Sezer's ELT Seminar Notes.

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its subject matter, language, just for the sake of it with no practical purpose in mind. For that reason, some linguists believe that linguistics has very little, if any, to offer to the language teacher.

It is, of course, true that linguists are not directly concerned with the applications of their theoretical research. From this it logically follows that a linguist has really nothing to say to the language teacher. However, this is really misleading. A linguist studying a certain language comes to learn a lot about that language, and this kind of knowledge can help the language teacher/learner a great deal.

Consider, for example, a person learning Turkish or a teacher teaching Turkish to foreigners. The Turkish plural suffix is sometimes realized as /-ler/ and sometimes /-lar/. A linguistically-minded teacher or student will know that there must be a rule governing this variation. In fact, a rather, simple-to-state rule account for the distribution of /-ler/ and /-lar/: the first occurs after words the last syllables of which contain front vowels, and the latter occurs after those words which contain back vowels in their last syllables.

Consider again as an example, a person learning or teaching English. The English plural suffix has three different readings: /-s/, /-z/, and /-Iz/. Here again linguistic information may prove to be of great help. A linguist will come to the aid of the teacher or the learner stating that /-s/ occurs after voiceless consonants except /s, s, d and that /-z/ occurs after vowels and voiced consonants except /z, c, j/, and that /-Iz/ occurs after /s, z, c, ch, sh, j/ (Sezer, 1986).

As a matter of fact, the link between linguistics and language teaching has always been present. Even in the earliest times, linguists were asked to teach languages here and there. But of course, before the modern times there were not many people who could be bothered to study a foreign language, which explains the unsettled nature of link.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, with the spread of public schools, school grammars came to be written. These grammars, unlike grammars written earlier, were directed to language teachers and learners. This is, of course, a direct link between linguistics and language teaching and learning.

The early school grammars were strictly prescriptive in nature. In other words, they presupposed some sort of platonic ideal grammar derived from Latin and attempted to relate English and all other modern languages to that ideal. Instead of studying the present state of the language they aimed at teaching, they repeated the rules found in earlier texts.

Beginning from the early 20th century, there is a shift from prescriptive

approach to descriptive approach. Contrastive descriptive grammars became available. Structural linguistics of the period held that each language had its own structure independent of Latin or any other ideal.

In 1940s in the U.S.A., linguistics made itself a sure place in the field of TESL. At that time the U.S.A. Army was in need of officers who could speak foreign languages. Schools were found to be quite inefficient to bring about the desired result. Therefore, the U.S. Army sought the help of linguistics. Those were the flourishing days of American Structural School. Linguists actively participated in intensive language programs, and to most people's surprise, officers could learn to speak.

We now say that in those years quite by accident the linguistic atmosphere had the appropriate attitude to the objective, making people speak. The success of the U.S. Army project motivated most people with the result that more and more people in U.S.A. enrolled in language classes.

This success of linguistic approach has given linguistics a dominant role in TESL. The branch of linguistics called APPLIED LINGUISTICS is taken by most people to be the application of linguistic information to TESL.

Today the scene of TESL displays an unbelievably intricate structure in which linguistics, applied linguistics, psychology and TESL interact. The applied linguist and the teacher trainer seem to dominate the scene.

In this complex structure, the foreign language teacher has the greatest responsibility. As in all the other fields, there are misleading presentations as well as the appropriate ones. The foreign language teacher should always be aware of the danger that he could easily be misled if he is not cautious enough. One other important point the teacher should keep in mind is that for him to be given all the answers he needs is extremely rare.

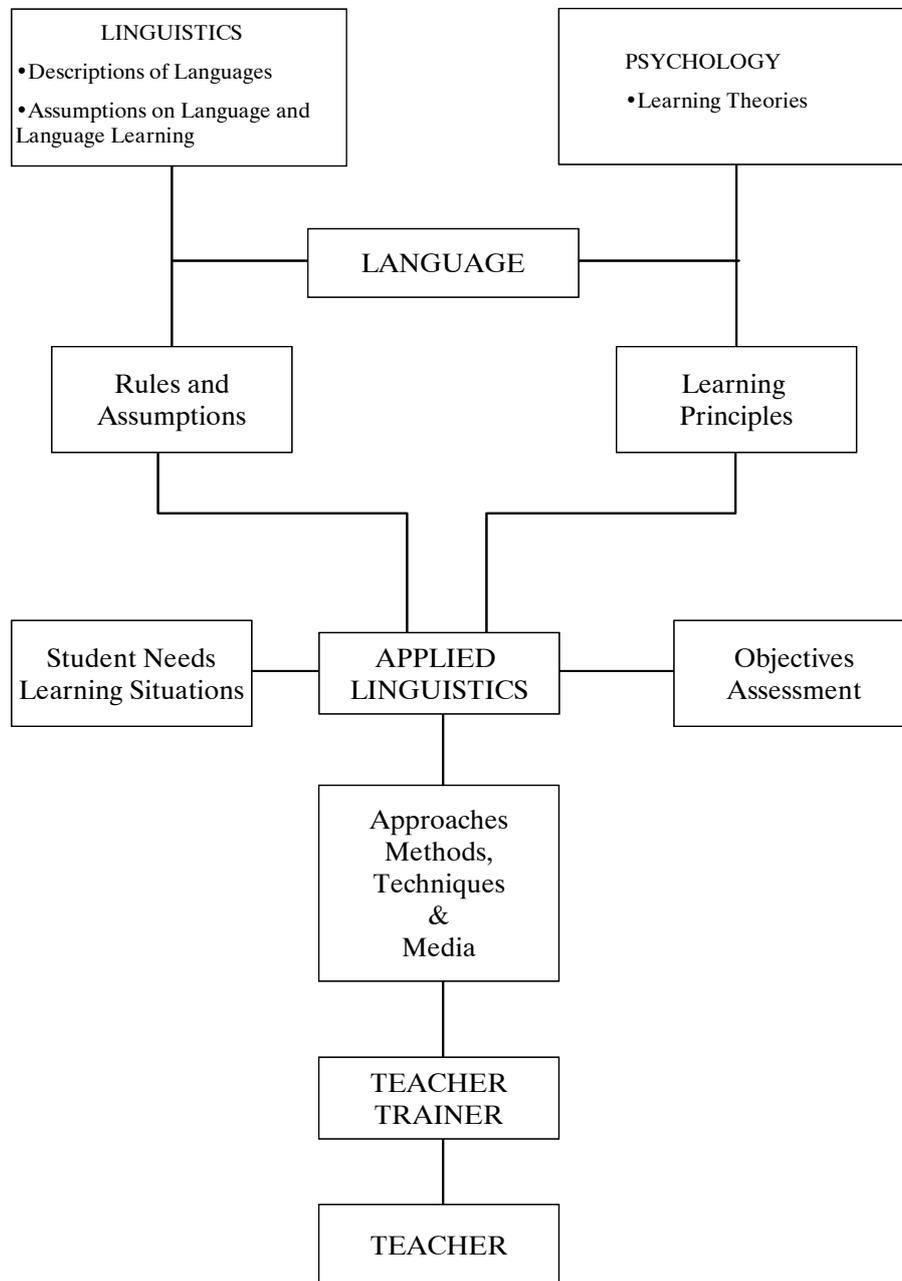


Figure 1 : *The Relationship between Language, Linguistics and Language Teaching.*

Here let us present a diagram illustrating the appropriate position of the TESL-related elements. (See Figure 1.)

From the diagram it can be deduced that ideally the teacher should be the applied linguist. However, this is rarely possible. The second best is to have teacher trainers who are also applied linguists. They then will be able to pass on the suggestions of applied linguistics to the teacher. The third best is to have teacher trainers who could pass on the suggestions from applied linguistics to the teacher.

However, quite often teacher trainers turn out to be people who could manipulate some certain classroom techniques. This is why it has been suggested above that every language teacher should know at least a bit of applied linguistics himself.

In the history of language teaching, we should also note, applied linguists have committed great blunders. Probably the biggest blunder they have made is the assumption that a person should learn a second language in the same manner he acquired his mother tongue. This assumption is universally accepted in the so-called Direct Method, which forbids the use of mother tongue in the classroom. Today there are still teacher trainers who, without really knowing why, insist that mother tongue use in class must be forbidden. Those teacher trainers may also be strictly against giving grammatical rules, again may be without really knowing why. If they do know the reason, they will state that a child acquiring his mother tongue does not receive any grammatical instruction. It is a pity that such teacher trainers cannot see that a person cannot "acquire" a second language; he must learn it.

One other major assumption held by some linguists and consequently by some applied linguists is that language is a set of speech habits. From this assumption it naturally follows that language learning is forming new speech habits. The thing for the applied linguist to do then is to devise techniques to help the learner form new habits. This is exactly what the direct people have done. This is how "mim-mem" (mimicry -memorization) came to be a way of learning foreign languages.

Today the transformational generative theory holds that language is not really a set of speech habits, but a rule-governed behaviour. Applied linguists, who side with the TG theory make rule learning is really achieved in the mind of the learner.

Let us here present a table to illustrate the differences between structuralism and the TG theory in the context of TESL. (See Figure 2.)

Assumptions in structuralism	Suggestions made by applied linguists	Assumptions in applied linguistics	Suggestions made the TG theory
Language is a set of speech habits.	Habit forming drills.	Language is rule-governed behavior.	Rule teaching drills
Language is acquired through imitation.	Min-mem practice	Language is acquired because the mind has an innate ability to form grammars.	Rule-forming drills.
In language learning, the human mind is receptive.	overlearning	The human mind is active.	Transformation drills.
A person when acquiring his mother tongue does not study grammar.	Grammar rules seldom given.	A person cannot learn a foreign language in the same way he acquires L1.	Rule-based activities.

Figure 2. Differences between Structuralism and the TG Theory in the Context of TESL.

Chapter 2

LANGUAGE TEACHING PRINCIPLES AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

General Principles in Teaching English

There are three phases in the acquisition of language structures and concepts. These are as follows:

1. The first stage is understanding
2. The second stage is production and manipulation
3. The third stage is communication

The class period can be divided into three parts corresponding basically to the three phases of language acquisition. These three parts are labelled preview, view and review. The preview concentrates on understanding. The view activities include the confirmation of competence, production and manipulation of forms, and "real" language activities over the content of the text. The review provides the students with activities that promote and require "real" language practice beyond the content of the text (Chastain, 1976:410-414).

Primary Guidelines in Teaching English

1. Consider the whole person. (There are individual differences in each class)
2. Keep the students involved. (Teacher-student and student-student interaction; group work)

3. Rapport and motivation. (Rapport involves establishing a classroom atmosphere in which students are stimulated to learn. This is between the teacher and the students. But motivation entails the students' incentive to learn.)
4. Tell the students the objectives. (The students should be aware of why and what they are doing in class.)
5. Teach all four language skills. (Language is made up of the four skills. In order to teach students to communicate, the teacher must provide training in all the skills necessary for communication.)
6. Teach listening and speaking first. Reading and writing next.
7. Teach only one thing at a time.
8. Sequence the learning tasks in order of difficulty (Language learning should be viewed as a continuous process of successive approximation to native speech, from simple to complex.) Teach the patterns gradually.
9. Teach for transfer of learning. (It is the teacher's duty to do it.)
10. Provide a variety of activities. (The teacher is obliged to provide as much variety of activities as possible. Variety is a necessity within the class hour.)
11. Resist the tendency to correct each mistake. (Teachers should refrain from demonstrating their own ability and intelligence at the drop of an error.)
12. Teach from the known to the unknown. (Moving from the known to the unknown helps them to relate and organize what they are learning.)
13. Teach with examples. (The old saying is that a picture is worth a thousand words. An example in language teaching must be worth quite a few explanations.) And then give the rules.
14. Use life situations. (They make the drills and exercises as meaningful as possible.) Also teach the language in use.
15. Structure the difficulty level of the questions. (Questions should be asked on a premeditated selective basis. - Ask easy questions to poor students, give the students a change to ask questions.)

Secondary Guidelines in Teaching English

1. Have something to give the class. (Careful planning is necessary.)
2. Give the students a feeling of confidence and success. (Students anticipation is based on feeling of confidence and success.) - Have fun.
3. Encourage the students. (Reinforce the students.) Let them know immediately when their response has been successful.

4. Call on the students by name.
5. Do not do in class what the students can do for themselves at home. (e.g. writing exercises and readings can be assigned as homework.)
6. Do not teach all you know. (Introduce one new structure at a time.)
7. Do not strive for mastery in a single day. (Learning takes place over a period of time.)
8. Recognize individual differences. (The teacher's task is to structure the learning situations in order to maximize the learning efficiency of each student.) Consider individual differences of students.
9. Use audio-visual aids whenever possible. The best that classroom teachers can do is to adopt a set of guidelines with which they can operate in a flexible fashion (Chastain, 1976).

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are also called as communication strategies in language studies. The taxonomy of learning strategies is made differently by the writers such as Dansereau (1978), Bialystok (1976), Rubin (1987) and O'Malley et al (1986).

The most comprehensive taxonomy has been prepared by O'Malley et al. (1985: 582-584). It is composed of three basic categories,

- i) Metacognitive,
- ii) Cognitive
- iii) Social-Affective.

The first category involves the metacognitive learning strategies. They refer to the description made by Brown and Palinscar to point out the learning tasks metacognitive strategies are applied.

Metacognitive learning strategies

Metacognitive learning strategies are given below:

1. **Advanced Organizers:** Making a general but comprehensive preview of the concept of principle in an anticipated learning activity.
2. **Directed Attention:** Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task to ignore irrelevant distractors.
3. **Selective Attention:** Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input.

4. **Self-Management:** Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions.
5. **Functional Planning:** Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out upcoming language tasks.
6. **Self-Monitoring:** Correcting one's speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present.
7. **Delayed Production:** Consciously deciding to postpone speaking to learn initially through listening comprehension.
8. **Self-Evaluation:** Checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.

Cognitive Learning Strategies

The second category involves the cognitive learning strategies. They refer to strategies that directly involve manipulation of learning materials to enhance learning or retention. Cognitive Learning Strategies are given as follows:

1. **Repetition:** Imitating a language model including overt practice silent rehearsal.
2. **Resourcing:** Defining or expanding a definition of a word or concept through use of target language reference materials.
3. **Translation:** Using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language.
4. **Grouping:** Reordering or reclassifying and perhaps labelling the material to be learned based on common attributes.
5. **Note-Taking:** Writing down the main idea, important points, outline or summary of information presented orally or in writing.
6. **Deduction:** Consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language.
7. **Recombination:** Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known element in a new way.
8. **Imagery:** Relating new information to visual concept in memory via familiar easily retrievable visualizations, phrases or locations.
9. **Auditory Representation:** Retention of the sound or similar sound for word, phrase or longer language sequence.
10. **Key Word:** Remembering a new word in the second language by i) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word, and ii) generating easily recalled images of some relationship between the new word.

11. Contextualization: Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence.
12. Elaboration: Relating new information to other concepts in memory.
13. Transfer: Using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task.
14. Inferencing: Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predict outcomes or fill in missing information.
15. Memorization: Memorizing a language model and using that construction to facilitate use of the target language.
16. Simplification: Using simple language constructions in clarifying, expanding or explaining the main idea or important points.
17. Use of Mother Tongue: Using words and sentences in the mother tongue when use of the target language is impeded by lack of proficiency in the second language.

Socioaffective learning strategies

The third category involves the socioaffective learning strategies. They include affective and social skills which need coping strategies for motivational and affective situations. They also demand various social settings and interactions. Socioaffective strategies are given as follows:

1. Cooperation: Working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information or model a language activity.
2. Question for Clarification: Asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation and / or examples.

A reading passage on language learning strategies

"Ten Language Learning Strategies" by H. H. Stern (from "What Can We Learn From the Good Language Learner, **Canadian Modern Language of Review** 34:4, March 1975)

What strategies does the good language learner use to move from zero to a workable competence? The list of the ten strategies reflects my own experience as a language teacher and learner, as well as my reading of the relevant literature, and it includes comparisons with the list of strategies developed by Joan Rubin (1975). It should be remembered that I am contrasting in a simplified manner the good and the poor learner, although in real life learners will combine characteristics of both.

1. A personal learning style or positive learning strategies