

THE CHANGE IN METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The scientific work provides an overview of the established definitions in the methods of teaching and learning a foreign language, the theories of language learning through the past spectrum of time to the modern days, as well as the shift of emphasis in the educational environment from the teacher to the learners. The learning processes are also analysed, as well as the criteria used to determine the success of learners and the goals of using a foreign language in relation to their own needs. Emphasis is also placed on intercultural competence, which is a significant part of language culture. Last but not least, the future direction and trend for implementing more digital tools to improve the processes of teaching and learning a foreign language, be it first, second or other, is considered. The interdisciplinary nature of foreign language teaching and learning is also noted, namely the close connection with psychology, psycholinguistics, sociology and linguistics.

Keywords: dynamics, change, innovation, learning environment, digital media

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to analyse the evolution of foreign language teaching and learning methodologies and to demonstrate the paradigm shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches in contemporary language education. Through a theoretical examination of major developments in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Applied Linguistics, the study substantiates the increasing significance of communicative competence, intercultural competence, and digital technologies as defining components of modern foreign language pedagogy (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Dooly & Vinagre, 2022; Tommerdahl et al., 2024).

2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a theoretical-conceptual research design based on a critical review and analytical synthesis of scholarly literature in the fields of Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and Foreign Language Education. A comparative analysis of successive language teaching paradigms—behaviourist and structuralist models (Skinner, 1957), cognitive and interactionist perspectives (Chomsky, 1957; Long, 1985), and communicative, learner-centred, and digitally enhanced approaches (Canale & Swain, 1980; Dooly & Vinagre, 2022; Zhang & Zou, 2024)—is employed to examine their pedagogical evolution. The synthesised theoretical evidence is interpreted to identify the fundamental pedagogical principles underlying this transformation and to substantiate the contemporary shift in foreign language teaching methodology.

3. RESULTS

The theoretical synthesis demonstrates that the historical development of language teaching methodologies constitutes a coherent pedagogical transformation rather than a sequence of isolated methodological innovations (Canale & Swain, 1980; Chomsky, 1957; Long, 1985; Skinner, 1957). The reviewed theoretical frameworks indicate that advances in Applied Linguistics, educational psychology, and language pedagogy have redefined both the role of the language educator and the objectives of foreign language instruction, with increasing emphasis on mediated support, meaningful interaction, and communicative performance (Ellis, 1994; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; Skehan, 2024; Vygotsky, 1978).

At the learner level, age of acquisition, language aptitude, motivation, anxiety, and access to comprehensible input emerge as variables that mediate second language development and learning outcomes (Birdsong, 2006; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Hernandez & Li, 2007; Krashen, 1982, 1985; Skehan, 1986). Intercultural communicative competence also emerges as an integral dimension of meaningful language use and learners' willingness to communicate (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Fathi et al., 2023). Furthermore, the analysis substantiates the growing pedagogical significance of digital technologies as integral components of contemporary language learning environments, supporting personalised learning, collaborative interaction, learner autonomy, and the development of communicative competence (Dooly & Vinagre, 2022; Tommerdahl et al., 2024; Zhang & Zou, 2024).

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the evolution of foreign language teaching methodologies represents a fundamental pedagogical transformation driven by advances in Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and educational theory. The transition from teacher-centred, knowledge-transmission models to learner-centred approaches has redefined both the objectives of foreign language education and the role of the language

educator, placing greater emphasis on communicative competence, learner autonomy, intercultural competence, and authentic language use (Byram, 1997; Canale & Swain, 1980; Skehan, 2024; Zhang & Zou, 2024). The analysis further demonstrates that the integration of digital technologies should be regarded not merely as a technological innovation but as a pedagogical extension of contemporary learner-centred language education (Dooly & Vinagre, 2022; Tommerdahl et al., 2024). Consequently, effective foreign language teaching requires an interdisciplinary approach that integrates linguistic, pedagogical, psychological, and technological perspectives in order to address the evolving educational needs of learners in contemporary multilingual and digitally mediated environments.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the theoretical analysis, it is recommended that contemporary foreign language education further strengthen the implementation of learner-centred pedagogical approaches that promote communicative competence, learner autonomy, and authentic language use (Skehan, 2024; Zhang & Zou, 2024). Intercultural communicative competence should be integrated into language-learning materials, communicative tasks, and assessment practices as a fundamental component of foreign language education (Byram, 1997; Chapelle, 2010; Deardorff, 2006; Fathi et al., 2023). Digital technologies should be incorporated as pedagogically meaningful tools that facilitate collaborative learning, personalised instruction, virtual exchange, and interactive language practice rather than serving solely as supplementary instructional resources (Dooly & Vinagre, 2022; Tommerdahl et al., 2024; Zhang & Zou, 2024).

Curricula should also recognise learners' existing linguistic repertoires as potential resources for additional language development and align intended learning outcomes with recognised communicative and intercultural standards (Cummins, 2007; National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Furthermore, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and language educators should adopt interdisciplinary approaches that integrate principles from Applied Linguistics, educational psychology, and digital pedagogy to ensure that foreign language instruction remains responsive to the evolving communicative and technological demands of contemporary education.

ADDITIONAL DATA

The paper contributes to the theoretical development of foreign language education by offering an integrated conceptual framework that relates the historical evolution of language teaching methodologies to contemporary learner-centred and technology-enhanced pedagogical practices. Its findings may support future theoretical research, curriculum design, language educator professional development, and the implementation of innovative approaches to foreign language education in higher education institutions.

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