LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS AND PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATIONS

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Abstract: This article examines changes in approaches to foreign language teaching associated with the shift from traditional, strictly structured methods to more innovative pedagogical models. The authors draw on the key ideas of H. D. Brown, as well as the historical analysis presented by Richards and Rogers, to trace the development of methods, from the classical 'age of methods' to today's concept of the 'post-method'. Particular attention is paid to the implementation of the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach and the formation of a new educational paradigm combining ecological, sociocultural and technological aspects. The analysis shows that contemporary innovations in teaching are linked to the search for a balance between students' cognitive activities and the benefits of digital technologies.

Keywords: pedagogical innovations, CLIL, post-method pedagogy, second language acquisition (SLA), sociocultural theory.

The history of foreign language teaching is a process of constantly seeking effective solutions. As Richards and Rogers (2001) note, traditional approaches have often failed to take into account the individual characteristics of learners and the specific nature of real-life learning contexts. Contemporary innovations are not limited to the introduction of new techniques; they involve a profound rethinking of the roles of teacher and learner. Today, the emphasis is shifting towards flexible methods that combine linguistic, psychological and digital components of the learning process.

Modern innovations are based on the principles of second language acquisition (SLA), discussed in detail by H. D. Brown (2007). In his view, language acquisition is not merely the memorisation of grammatical rules, but the result of a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional and linguistic factors.

The problem with older methods was that traditional teaching approaches (such as the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods) treated the student as a passive recipient of knowledge. According to Richards and Rogers, such practices often resulted in learners having a good grasp of the rules but being unable to communicate in the language.

The transition to a new era has taken place to such an extent that contemporary scholars (Alemi &Daftarifard, 2010) assert that the era of universal methods has come to an end. The main innovation now lies in a 'principle-based approach', where the teacher independently shapes the learning environment, selecting strategies that take into account specific cultural and social conditions. This requires a move away from rigidly following a textbook and towards the conscious design of the educational process.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has become one of the most significant educational innovations in recent years. As Ruiz de Sarobe (2011) notes, CLIL is much more than simply teaching a subject in a foreign language. This approach combines the development of thinking skills and language skills.

The dual focus of learning is evident in that, unlike the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) methodology, CLIL creates an environment for natural language immersion. Subjects such as history, chemistry or management are taught through the target language, which promotes conscious assimilation of the material: new information is linked to existing knowledge and experience.

Cognitive development is evident in the use of language to solve learning tasks, which fosters the development of complex thinking. Research shows that learners studying under the CLIL system are more motivated, as the language immediately becomes a useful and meaningful tool for achieving goals.

Contemporary educational trends are closely intertwined with the sociocultural ideas of Vygotsky, who viewed learning as the result of collaborative activity. Innovations today are expressed through the introduction of digital tools and educational technologies.

Alem and Daftarifard (2010) emphasise that new technologies digital portfolios, mobile learning apps, virtual classrooms transform lessons into part of a global educational environment. These resources do not replace the teacher, but help to expand forms of interaction and develop communication skills. As a result, digital technologies act as a bridge between theory and the practical reality of communication, making the educational process more open and socially oriented.

Conclusion

Innovations in language education represent a combination of traditional approaches and modern methodologies. The move away from rigid methodological frameworks, the introduction of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and the emphasis on sociocultural and technological aspects all underscore a focus on learner-centred education. The future of language teaching depends on how skilfully teachers combine educational content, the psychological characteristics of their students, and the capabilities of digital tools to create a flexible and motivating learning environment.

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