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## TEMA 1: Evolución de la didáctica de las lenguas. Tendencias actuales de la didáctica del inglés como lengua extranjera. Los enfoques comunicativos.

Language is a purely human activity; in fact, it is one of the main features that distinguish man from the rest of creatures.

An act of verbal communication is only possible between human beings who transfer their ideas from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the listener (Campbell).

In the long search for the best way of teaching a foreign language, hundreds of different approaches, or methods, have been devised. Each *method* (a global plan for the presentation of language material) is based on a particular view or theory of language learning (*approach*), and usually recommends the use of a specific set of *techniques* (every individual single procedure for use in the classroom) and materials, which may have to be implemented in a fixed sequence.

Ambitious claims are often made for a new teaching method, but none has yet been shown to be intrinsically superior. The contemporary attitude is flexible and utilitarian: it is recognized that there are ways of reaching the goal of foreign language competence, and that teachers need to be aware of a range of methods, in order to find the one most appropriate to the learners' needs and circumstances, and to the objectives of the course. It is frequently necessary to introduce an eclectic approach, in which aspects of different methods are selected to meet the demands of particular teaching situations.

Taking those previous ideas into account, it is obvious that the study of language has always been of great importance from the very first stages in the history of human race. And, of particular importance the study of different languages as a means of establishing communication with the people of divergent cultures.

The problem arises when we realise that we don't know how a language is acquired: "First, language is learned, that is, every normal child can learn any natural language as a first language, under the appropriate conditions. Second, no theory can explain this fact. That is, we have no model which can show how language is learned under the appropriate circumstances" (Campbell, 1978).

As experience tells us, there are not universal and magic solutions but just methods that will only work with our students in our schools and in our environments (Finocchiaro). Each pupil and moreover each classroom is a world in itself.

Anyhow, languages have always been studied even in the most ancient civilisations, but, perhaps, the greatest milestone in the learning of languages regarding the modern western world was the discovery of America. It was in America that the "*direct-method*" was widely used for the first time for both conquerors and aborigines.

Yet, it was not until the eighteenth century that the study of modern languages was officially introduced. It happened in the University of Harvard, when the teaching of French substituted the teaching of Hebrew.

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## 0. THE THREE MAJOR GENERAL PROBLEMS IN FLT AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF ITS METHODS

Now that these conceptual aspects have been considered and before presenting the main methods, it seems appropriate to mention the three major language learning problems that language pedagogy and ELT have dealt with through this century; issues that always concern researchers and the teaching profession. H.H. Stern (1983) labels them as follows:

1. *The L1-L2 connection*, that is, the disparity in the learner's mind between the inevitable dominance of the mother tongue and the weaknesses of his/her second language knowledge.
2. *The explicit-implicit option*, that is, the choice between more conscious ways of learning a foreign language and more subconscious or automatic ways of learning it. This issue remains to a great extent unresolved and has very often posed a dilemma to the FLT profession and research, as, for example, during the debate between cognitivism and audiolingual approaches in the 60s, and later on with Krashen's Monitor Theory, which makes a distinction between language learning (explicit and conscious) and language acquisition (implicit and subconscious)
3. *The code-communication dilemma* has become a major issue recently. It refers to the problems that learners have to cope with when learning a new language, as they have to pay attention on the one hand to linguistic forms (the code) and on the other to real communication.

As can be imagined, several classifications of teaching methods have been made, in an attempt to impose some degree of order on what is a highly diverse and idiosyncratic field. Basically, all of the methods involve one or more of the following essential ideas:

- *Translation*, which involves providing comparable native language words, phrases, and sentences for unknown target language items.
- *Situational context participation*, which entails the use of the target language in actual or simulated situations in which the pupil participates.
- *Linguistic analysis*, which concerns the application of linguistic knowledge either indirectly through the selection, organization, and grading of target language materials or directly in the actual teaching of pupils.
- *The adopted learning psychology*, which will tell us whether it is best that syntactic rules and other linguistic complexities be learned directly by explication or learned indirectly through induction.

Apart from these main characteristics, teaching methods differ on other ones. These may include  
*sort of skills emphasized, use of spontaneous language, special features...*

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# 1. FIRST APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES

The beginning in the teaching of modern foreign languages did not bring about any revolution whatsoever in the methodology of language learning. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and even in the 20<sup>th</sup>, foreign languages were taught in much the same way as classical ones.

## 2.1. THE GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD

Used up to very recent times, it consisted in the use of translation and in rigid presentations of grammar, that is, the explicit study of grammatical rules and vocabulary. The grammars of Latin and Greek and their terminology were applied to the teaching of modern languages. Such methodology did not include conversation because its purpose was to assimilate the prescriptive grammars and then proceed to read its literature.

It is fashionable today to criticise the methods of the past. However, the grammar-translation method has its positive aspects too. Through grammar and translation, the student acquired a thorough knowledge of grammar structures, syntax, phonology... and such knowledge could be easily transformed into conversation.

### 2.1.1. OVERVIEW OF THE GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD

Characteristics of this method:

- First, reading; then translating (into the student's native tongue).
- Learning the rules (often written down into the student's native language).
- Memorising lists of vocabulary items and their meaning.
- Writing sentences using the vocabulary and the grammatical

rules learnt. Advantages:

- Students go from the known (L1) to unknown (L2).
- Grammar is explicitly set out.
- This method is easy to use.
- The student has no need to be fluent, when he uses the second

language. Disadvantages:

- Spoken language is neglected.
- Social function of language is missing.
- The language used is often quite unreal.
- This approach is too difficult for some students to be understood.

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## 2.2. DIRECT OR NATURAL METHOD

This method developed as a reaction to grammar-translation, mainly in France. It began to form in the nineteenth century and its name comes from what was considered to be the natural way to learn a language: exposure to the language used in everyday communicative interactions. As its model was first language acquisition, grammar was not taught and translation was irrelevant.

The aim was, then, to emphasize the learning of speech, acquiring meaning in environmental context and learning grammar through induction.

In short, it can be defined as a method of teaching a foreign language through conversation, discussion and reading in the language itself without use of the pupil's language, without translation and without the study of formal grammar.

## 2.3. THE READING APPROACH (West)

Its main aim was to learn a language by means of reading texts. It made students able to control vocabulary in relation to their levels. They were offered graded readers that created graded readers. Mother tongue was used to give instructions as a way of making students more at ease. This method presented a great variety of techniques, some of which are known as *rapid reading techniques*.

Its main characteristics are:

- Priority to reading. Reading comprehension is the unique skill emphasized.
- Emphasis on great works of literature in the foreign language.
- Translation.
- Fluency limitation in the foreign language of most teachers.

## 2. TWENTIETH CENTURY INNOVATIONS

### 3.1. THE BERLITZ SCHOOL

Eventually, private institutions and academies began to recognise that the student could be more interested in learning to speak the language than to read it. One of these schools was Berlitz.

Its motto was "*the eye is the enemy of the ear*" and summing up, this method consisted in native young teachers, no translation at all, emphasis on oral work, avoidance of grammar explanations and the technique of question-answer. Consequently, the principle they worked on was that the pupil did not see the text, but listened to it in such a way that he could not possibly assign the letters of the second language the same value they had in his mother tongue.

## 3.2. BASIC ENGLISH (Odgen)

The following discoveries made the appearance of the Basic English method possible:

- Every language has a basic grammar that should be taught first.
- Every language has a basic vocabulary too consisting of the most frequent words (around 850 words).

The methodology intended to teach both this basic grammar and basic vocabulary. The verbs were mainly phrasal ("get in" instead of "enter") and the nouns paraphrases "small tree" instead of "bush") while the adjectives were very limited ("nice" for the concepts pretty, wonderful, fantastic...)

All in all, *basic* is an artificial language which can only serve for very specific communicative purposes and that is not the way real languages function.

## 3.3. STRUCTURALISM (Saussure, Bloomfield and Sapir)

### 3.3.1. THE ORAL APPROACH

The Oral Approach was the first move in what can be called the structuralist direction and has its origin in the British applied linguistics of the 1920s and 1930s, represented by Palmer and Hornby. It was also the first attempt to apply a scientific foundation to FLT and was dominant from the 1930s to the 1960s. In the 1960s this approach was referred to as the Situational Approach, due to the greater emphasis placed on the *situational* presentation and practice of language.

The main difference with the American Structuralism lies in the British notion of "situation" and purpose (rooted in Firth and Halliday's notions of meaning, context and situation).

Situations that always have an underlying purpose on the part of the speaker and give more attention to meaning.

The characteristics of the Oral Approach are the following:

- Syllabus organised in sentence patterns; graded in difficulty and sequence.
- Vocabulary: very important aspect of FLT.
- The teacher as a model.
- No explanations or translations: the student is expected to deduce meaning from context.
- Grammar is learnt with oral procedures by means of an inductive process from simple to more complex forms.
- Correctness is crucial (students must avoid errors).
- Oral language comes first.
- The textbook and visual materials are very important.

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### 3.3.2. THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD

The Audiolingual or aural-oral Method developed within the North American structuralist tradition of FLT (Bloomfield and Sapir). It is the direct successor to the direct method, for aside from incorporating structural linguistic theory (language is envisaged as a system of structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning; the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, structures and sentence types) and behaviouristic psychology (language is regarded as a series of stimuli and responses, a series of habits) into its foundations, the audiolingual method significantly differs from the direct method only in emphasis as it prefers drills to the natural use of language in context.

One of its main features is the importance given to the oral aspects of language, breaking with the relevance of the written language.

Its tenets can be summarized as follows:

- FLL is a process of habit formation.
- Language learning proceeds by analogy.
- Separation of the skills –listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Use of dialogues as the chief means of presenting the language.
- Emphasis on certain practice techniques, mimicry, memorization and pattern drills.
- Dominant emphasis is placed on the fundamental skills, i.e., listening & speaking.
- No reference to mother tongue.
- Errors are to be avoided.

### 3.3.3. THE AUDIOVISUAL METHOD

- A visually presented scenario provides the chief means of involving the learner in meaningful utterances and contexts.
  - Language learning has three stages:
    - The learner becomes familiar with everyday language.
    - The learner is capable of talking more consecutively on general topics and to read non-specialized fiction and the newspaper.
    - The learner is able to use more specialized discourse of professional and other interests.
  - Lessons begin with the filmstrip and tape *presentation*.
  - Then, explanation by the teacher through pointing, demonstrating, selective listening, question and answer.
  - After that, dialogues are repeated several times and memorized by frequent replays of the tape-recordings and the filmstrip or by language laboratory practice.
  - Finally, students are emancipated from the tape-and-filmstrip presentation (exploitation phase).
  - Therefore, grammatical as well as phonological features are practised.
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- No importance is attributed to linguistic explanations
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Writing and reading are delayed, but in due course are nonetheless given emphasis.

- Shows difficulty in conveying meaning.
- Displays rigid teaching sequences upon teachers.

### **3.4. SOME CRITICISM TO STRUCTURALISM**

Chomsky was one of the first theoreticians to note the deficiencies of this type of grammars: in his opinion, the structuralists only deal with the surface structure of language leaving the underlying structure behind and, thus, forgetting such important aspects as ambiguity or intuition. And, what is more, the kinds of exercises proposed by structuralism are purely mechanical and have no connections with actual situations with the result that students often lacked meaningful situations.

Another important criticism is that structural methods offered teachers the material they considered that should be taught but did not show them how to teach it.

## **3. PRESENT-DAY METHODOLOGICAL TRENDS**

### **4.1. TRANSFORMATIONAL-GENERATIVE GRAMMAR**

In 1957 there was an important shift in the study of languages due to the importance attached to the concept of *cognition* (Chomsky) in accounting for human language activity and this was later on developed until it became the "so-called" psycholinguistics.

Chomsky criticised the fact that structuralism did not describe the rules that allow speakers to create an infinite number of utterances, in other words, their linguistic competence. In his opinion, structuralists did not pay attention either to the deep structure of language, forgetting thus that human language is a creative activity in which a speaker is able to utter grammatically correct sentences without having ever heard them before.

He is mainly concerned with the structure of language and with its creative nature especially. Indirectly, Chomsky was making indirect contributions to teaching:

- There is value in offering ungrammatical examples apart from the correct ones.
- Pupils should be allowed to make errors.
- Explanations in language learning are valuable.
- Priority must be given to free expression and creativity.

### **4.2. THE NOTION OF SITUATION. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS**

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The concept of “situation” has played a crucial role in the thinking of Firth and “The London School of Linguistics”, and it is an important contribution in the field of language teaching.

Firth, developed from Malinowski the concept of "context of situation", which says, in broad terms, “that the meaning of an utterance is in function of the cultural and situational context in which it occurs” (Howatt, 1985). Firth made special emphasis on the unity of language viewing it as a social activity.

But perhaps Firth's most important contribution was the embryo of the “registers” –level of discourse- of language, an idea that he developed towards the end of his life when he began to identify some "restricted" languages or specialised varieties of language related to professional interests or social roles.

Halliday, one of Firth's students, devoted his career to the preservation of the unity of language and language use regardless of the difficulty of the procedures needed to relate them.

This new line of thought led to the birth of *sociolinguistics* in the 70s, which deals with “those types of linguistic enquiry in which the use of language was accorded at least an equal status to its formal features” (Howatt). Perhaps, the two major contributions of sociolinguistics are that, on the one hand, it brought together the EFL tradition of linguistically organized syllabus and primary school tradition of activity methods: communicative use of language; and, on the other hand, that it extended the teaching of foreign languages to all kinds of schools and people.

### **4.3. THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH OR COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING**

It was the expansion of language learning demands in the sixties what gave birth to the concept of communication in language teaching: overseas students, growth of materials, new educational policies...

This approach is usually called *communicative*, though other labels –particularly *functional* or *notional* at its early stages- have also been used as synonyms. The term *communicative*, in relation with language teaching, denotes a marked concern with semantic aspects of language (Wilkins, 1978).

Instead of starting from the grammatical forms or the language structures, as the preceding methods, Wilkins tried to show that language was organized not around the traditional concepts of grammar but rather around two systems of meanings:

- notional categories.
- categories of communicative function.

*Notions* are the meanings and concepts the learner needs in order to communicate, e.g. time, quantity, duration, location...

*Categories of communicative function* are speech acts such as requesting, denying, offering...

This work of Wilkins and the group of experts culminated in the document called *Threshold Level* of the Council of Europe. This document includes lists of situations, functions, topics, general and specific notions and adequate language forms, as well as some methodological implications. The *Threshold Level*, together with the contributions of some applied linguists, text-book writers, educationists, etc., led to the consolidation of the new approach known as Communicative.

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This method stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use English for communicative purposes. In other words, to have always a communicative goal in what we learn. The core of the language lesson is the communicative activity itself.

Communicative methods have attracted universal interest, and much influenced the practice of modern foreign language teaching. Johnson proposed five principles in *communicative syllabus design and methodology*:

- The *information transfer* principle is applied to activities which involve the students extracting relevant information from a reading or listening texts and reproducing it.
- The *information gap* principle has been renamed “*communication gap*” to allow for a further distinction between information and opinion gap activities. In a communication gap activity one student knows information (information gap) not known by another, or there is a difference of opinion between speakers/writers (opinion gap).
- The *jigsaw* principle is used in both listening and reading and techniques where the class is divided into groups –usually two or three- and each group is given only part of a situation or story which, later on, will be built up as a whole by means of a process of communication between the members of each group.
- The *task dependency* principle consists in having clear and precise goals and objectives, as this has been proved to lead to successful foreign language learning in the classroom.
- The *correction for content* principle stresses the importance of achieving the balance between accuracy and fluency. Grammar correction is not the only important thing.

The application of these principles to our lessons will result in our use of a communicative methodology; however, we must not think of communicative activities in black or white terms. There exists a continuum from totally non-communicative activities –characterised by having no communicative purpose or desire, focusing on one language item, showing teacher intervention, control of materials and emphasis on form not content- to fully communicative ones –characterised by a communicative purpose and desire, displaying variety of language, showing no teacher intervention nor control of materials and emphasis on content not form.

It is characteristic of the communicative approach that much of the class activities are carried out with students working in small groups. Such configurations maximize students' communication and give them ample opportunity to negotiate meaning.

Evaluation would be performed by means of communicative activities, students being assessed according to their ability to get their messages across.

The role of the teacher is that of a facilitator of the students' learning, manages the class activities, acts as an adviser, supplying the language that students need, and, other times, is a “co- communicator”, engaging in the communicative activities along with the students.

However, this process does not imply a coherent community based on the Communicative Approach, as there is no single text, nor any single model. The understanding of the approach differs from some authors to others and several models for syllabus design with different central elements have developed (structures plus functions; functional spiral around a structural core; functional; notional; task- based;...) The differences between the models are so important that some authors (Breen 1987) consider that a new FLT paradigm is emerging –the procedural (process and task-based approaches)-, as an alternative to propositional (formal and functional) approaches. We will refer to this aspect further on.

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There are, however, some distinctive features of the Communicative Approach (Finnochiaro & Brumfit):

- Meaning is paramount.
- Dialogues, if used, centre round communicative functions.
- Contextualization is a basic premise.
- Language learning is learning to communicate.
- Communication is sought.
- Drilling may occur but peripherally.
- Comprehensible pronunciation is sought.
- Any device that helps the learner is accepted.
- Communication may be encouraged from the beginning.
- Some use of L1 is accepted.
- Translation may be used.
- Reading and writing can start from the very first day.
- **Communicative competence** is the desired goal.
- Language is created through trial and error.
- Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.
- Students are expected to interact with other people.

#### 4.3.1. ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

It is difficult to assess the Communicative Approach as it is not a totally defined method and has been subject to several interpretations, especially at the levels of design and classroom procedures. It has had a strong impact on language teaching and the importance of its contribution is shown in this summary (McDonough & Shaw 1993):

1. Increasing concern with the meaning potential of language.
  2. The relationship between language form and function is of a rather complex character.
  3. The concept of communication goes beyond the sentence to texts and conversations.
  4. Appropriacy of language use is considered alongside accuracy, which has implications for error correction, materials and activities.
  5. It provides realistic and motivating language practice.
  6. The concept *communicative* is applied to all four language skills.
  7. The learner's knowledge and experience of his/her mother tongue is used.
  8. It has encouraged a higher level of language reflection and awareness.
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But, on the other hand, it is evident that there are still some unresolved problems with the Communicative Approach:

- a) Too much emphasis has been placed –particularly in the early stages- on speaking and listening, to the detriment of reading and writing.
- b) There has been a lack of reflection on language aspects.
- c) The criteria for selecting and grading the chosen functions and grammatical exponents to be taught are not clear.
- d) Critics have pointed out that it is not appropriate to foreign language situations, so advocate a more grammatically-oriented syllabus.
- e) Again, not all the teachers whose mother tongue is not English are confident enough to work with this approach.
- f) In fact, some of the proposals imply a new selection of language through functions, as the structuralists did with structures.
- g) Its advocacy of a meaningful use of the language is not always clear, as the activities, or tasks to be undertaken are not always really meaningful.

#### **4.4. OTHER PROPOSED FLT METHODS: “DESIGNER METHODS OF THE SPIRITED SEVENTIES”**

We have analyzed above the main approaches and methods of FLT, as they have been labelled traditionally. Now we would like to make a short reference to some other methods that have become less widespread and known but deserve some attention.

Some of these innovations in FLT can be considered part of humanistic methods, as they are related to humanistic ideas and centred on the learner and the classroom climate.

##### **4.4.1. THE SILENT WAY**

- Devised by Caleg Gattegno in the early 1970s.
- Quite related to cognitivism.
- Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learnt.
- Learning is facilitated by accompanying (mediating) physical objects.
- Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned.
- Teaching is, consequently, subordinated to learning.
- Silence is considered the best vehicle for learning and mental organization, because students can concentrate on the task.
- A key aspect: the indirect role of the teacher and the active role played by the learner.

##### **4.4.2. COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING**

- Teachers take the role of non-directive counsellors and students the role of clients,
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creating a context in the classroom that engages the whole person, including emotional as well as linguistic knowledge.

#### 4.4.3. SUGGESTOPEDIA

- Attention is paid to the classroom climate created with the furniture and the setting, music and a specific way of teaching by the teacher.
- -Authority from the teacher exerts a great influence on students who remember best.
- Infantilization -teacher/learner interaction equals parent/child relation in order to help students to regain the self-confidence, spontaneity and receptivity of the child.
- Learners not only learn from direct teaching but from the environment.
- Intonation, rhythm and concert pseudo-passiveness –co-ordinated with music- to help to avoid boredom, to induce a relaxed attitude and to give meaning to language materials.

#### 4.4.4. TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE

- Attempts to coordinate speech and action.
- **Objective:** teaching language through physical actions.
- Comprehension abilities are emphasized more than productive skills.
- The teaching of speaking should be postponed until listening skills have been consolidated.
- Meaning rather than form is emphasised.
- Stress should be minimised.

#### 4.4.5. THE NATURAL APPROACH

- The aim is to teach the communicate **abilities**.
- Grammar and linguistic structures are not central to the language.
- Language is a means of communicating meaning.
- As much as comprehensible input (roughly-tuned) as possible must be presented.
- Whatever helps comprehension is important.
- Focus on listening and reading; speaking should be allowed to emerge.
- Student work should centre on meaningful communication rather than on form; input should be interesting and so contribute to a relaxed classroom atmosphere.

### 4.5. NEW MOVES: THE PROCEDURAL APPROACHES

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- Task-based and process approach.
  - Linguistic forms and functions are partial aspects of what is to be learnt.
  - Tasks are the central element of learning.
  - By means of tasks we will achieve some objectives in the target language through a process which will give a result or will solve a problem, as is usually done in real life.
  - Flexible curriculum design.
  - The results of the evaluation are introduced back into the planning process.
  - One key concept: **HOW** to do something is much more important than *knowing something*.

## 4. SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE LEARNING

If there is as yet no single theory that can account for the diversity observed when learning a foreign language, we can at least point out several factors which seem to result in successful language learning:

- (a) *Aptitude*: though anyone can learn a language given sufficient motivation, intelligence, and opportunity, the task seems to be easier if some characteristics are present in person. People need to be capable of assimilating knowledge in difficult positions. They should have a good memory, and be good at finding patterns in samples of data. Of particular importance is an ability to detect phonetic differences.
- (b) *Learning-how-to-learn strategies*: pupils can benefit from being taught to “learn-how-to-learn” foreign languages useful strategies, such as silent rehearsal, techniques of memorization, and alternative ways of expressing what they want to say.
- (c) *Regular exposure to the foreign language*: exposure to the foreign language needs to be regular. The aim should be to teach little and often. We must remember that quickly learned is quickly forgotten.
- (d) *Exposure to authentic materials*: exposure to authentic material and native speakers is of real benefit. An important dimension is the use of educational visits abroad.
- (e) *Carefully selected and graded teaching objectives*: teaching objectives need to be carefully selected and graded to permit realistic progress with under-achievers, as well as with the gifted.
- (f) *Flexible teaching methods*: teaching methods should be flexible to suit the needs of the individual children and to make the best use of classroom design and resources.
- (g) *Motivation*: it is a central factor. Students need to see that foreign languages are taken seriously by the society and especially by the teachers; a non-motivated teacher will result in a class of under-achievers.

If we bear all these aspects in mind and adopt our method accordingly we will succeed as foreign language teachers.

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## 5. SOME CONCLUSIONS

We have considered the different approaches and methods of FLT as models or paradigms of theory, research and school practice. Some of them may be considered obsolete from a scientific point of view, some others seem to be more current, but in fact all of them have introduced innovations at a given moment, superimposing them on the former ones in an eclectic way. However, all methods have at least two things in common: 1) their belief that they are the best, and 2) a set of prescriptions that teachers have to follow necessarily.

We do not suggest that teaching should be approached following a particular method as a set of prescriptions, but on the contrary as a dynamic and reflective process, which means a permanent interaction among the curriculum, teachers, students, activities, methodology, and instructional materials. What actually happens in the classroom, alongside careful planning and evaluation, becomes the most important thing teachers have to reflect on and then relate to theory or other experiences.

We propose, therefore, an active role for teachers, who design their own content and tasks, classroom interaction, materials, methodology, evaluation, etc., instead of a passive role which means dependence on other people's designs and methods. The expression *classroom researcher* clearly represents the new role considered above. Then, instead of an uncritical and eclectic way of teaching, teachers should introduce a constant analysis and interpretation of what is happening in the classroom. Certainly, it is the best way of curriculum, teacher and learner development.

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