

# **Chapter I**

## **The Development of the Speaking Skill in the Different Teaching Methods**

### **Introduction**

Throughout history foreign language teaching has always been an important practical concern. As a result there have been many different methods used to teach languages, each of these methods has distinct advantages as well as drawbacks. Although there is no perfect method to follow, still many among them have proved their acceptable application through centuries; others have been set aside for historical records.

Thus , this chapter deals with the description and the discussion of some methods which enjoy significant use and dominate second /foreign language teaching field in the past century, from the Grammar Translation method to the current Communicative approach. We shall examine their tenets (similarities and differences) and evaluate their effectiveness .This chapter tends to give specific emphasis on undertaking an overall view about the status of the oral language in these methods through tracing the importance of its skills specifically the speaking skill in each one .This latter namely investigates the role of the oral communication in EFL classrooms, what oral skills learners need to develop as well as the reality and the recent status of the oral language in these classrooms

### **A.I.1 Grammar Translation Method (GTM)**

The Grammar Translation Method grew up in the early to the nineteenth century . This method is based on a sequence of classroom activities .The sequence starts with a clear statement of rules, followed by a lengthy vocabulary lists intended to be learned by heart .In classroom where students are learning a foreign language using this method , it exists a variety of translation exercises into and out of the target language .Grammar Translation Method involves very much engagement of the mind.(Johnson,2001)

Richards and Rodgers (1986) came to state that:

“Grammar Translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language, first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language “ (p 3) .

Hence , through the application of this method , the progress in language was measured not by the learner’s ability to communicate and use the target language , but rather by the ability to read prestigious literary texts as well as the translation of passages from one language to another .Richards and Rodgers (1986) argued that:

“Reading and writing are the major focus ; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening” (p3).

They insist that the Grammar Translation Method is still used in contexts where understanding literary texts is the primary focus of foreign language study with a little need to or use of the speaking knowledge.

“The focus of Grammar translation teaching is on the written not the spoken language” (Johnson,2001,16).

The same point is developed by Johnson (2001) ,who explains that Grammar Translation method tended to improve the intellectual discipline rather than a path for communication. According to him the non communication leads to what is known for the modern readers “ the lack of authenticity “ , since it tends to use sentences concocted to contain particular grammar points that were being taught.

Obviously, it appears many complaints and arguments against Grammar Translation Method. Its overemphasis is on the lack of care about speech production to serve communication as well as the non authenticity of the target language.

### **A.I.2The Direct Method**

As a result of the Grammar Translation Method’s application, it appeared a clear recognition of the need for speaking proficiency rather than reading grammar or appreciating literary texts as the main purpose of the language teaching process. So, a new approach to foreign language teaching has been developed .It is the direct method.

The Direct method appears to compensate the lack committed by GTM, it comes to destroy its principles and to support the idea that any foreign language could be taught without translation or the use of the learner's mother tongue if the meaning is conveyed .According to this method language could be best taught by using it actively in classroom.

The direct method assumed that the native speaker's language is the model, but it supports creating an oral based methodology. Its emphasis was placed very firmly on the spoken language which can be successfully realized through a systematic attention to pronunciation.( Richards and Rodgers , 1986).

**“Teachers must encourage direct and spontaneous use of the foreign language in the classroom” .( Richards and Rodgers , 1986,9).**

In this trend , Richards and Rodgers (1986) added that:

“In the Direct method , oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around questions and answers exchanged between teacher and students “ (p32).

Unless , the Direct method represented a great shift towards developing oral /aural aspects of language, but it was criticized by the more academically based proponents of the reform movement. As a result, there exist many arguments against this teaching method. Those drawbacks were noticed through a deep observation on the practical side of the method to include the failure to realize a true communication; since the emphasis was on dealing with listening just for developing pronunciation rather than communication .Speaking was limited to the mastery of certain teaching aspects mainly based on question-and-answer exchange. (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

Other drawbacks come to appear through their statements:

- “ - It required teachers who were native speakers or who had native like fluency in the foreign language.
- It was largely dependent on the teacher's skill rather than on a text book and not all teachers were proficient enough in the foreign language to adhere to the principle of the method”

(Richards and Rodgers, 1986,28)

### **A.I.3.The Audio-lingual Method**

"Audiolingualism is a foreign language teaching method that shares many characteristics with the reform methods nevertheless has a clear identity of its own"(Johnson, 2001, 171)

It has appeared by the entry of U.S.A into the World War II .This later had a significant effect on the language teaching in America. In its beginning, it seemed to be a method created just for the sake of fulfilling military duties applicable in a war circumstances, but later, it has been emerged as a result of the increased attention given to foreign language teaching in U.S.A toward the end of 1950's as well as the need for foreign language proficiency in listening and speaking and a radical change in this field.

The method was based on a bending of principles, of behaviour psychology and precepts of structural Linguistics. It has many characteristics such as: primacy of speech, stimulus response reinforcement, habit formation through repetition incrementalism, contrastive linguistics and inductive learning.

(River, 1964 quoted by Johnson, 2001)

Harmer (2001) comes to focus on two characteristics among those cited above .He explained that this foreign language teaching method tends to use more stimulus –response reinforcement model, and through a continuous process of such a positive reinforcement, it attempted to engender the other characteristic which is the good habits in language learning through repetition .This method depends on what is known as drills to form these habits.(Harmer,2001)

So, following the Audio-lingual teaching method and with an exclusive emphasis on the oral skills, the teacher in this latter presents the structures through dialogues to be repeated and memorized by the learners. After that, many exercises have to be used to reinforce the structure which had been taught and ensure the learners' ability to use it in other contexts. It depends on mimicry, memorization of a set of sentences and the teaching of patterns using repetition with the great emphasis on accuracy , since according to the proponents of ALM the continual repetition of errors would lead to a fixed acquisition of incorrect structures and non standard pronunciation .(Harmer,2001)

As it was mentioned above and unlike the grammar translation method, the Audio-lingual method considers the writing skill as the last skill to develop and gives more care to

the oral skills, what is called speech primacy. Proponents of this method emphasised the fact that any natural language is first spoken than put in its written form .so, students should be exposed to the oral language than to the written one .In fact, it was argued that:

**"The Audio-lingual method regards speech as" primary", because it is the first medium the L1 child masters .Speech comes first and writing follows on."**

**(Johnson, 2001, 46).**

As a result of this attention paid to improve learners' speaking abilities , the teaching materials used have changed to include language laboratories , tapes and tape recorders and consider them as basic aids to improve speaking and listening .these aids are used in case no native speakers are available .(Richards and Rodgers , 1986)

What remains to mention is that in the Audio-lingual teaching method, there is a tendency to focus on manipulation of the target language and to disregard content and meaning.

#### **A.I.4.The Silent Way**

It is a method of language teaching devised by Caleb Cattegno .it was originated in the early 1970's .The basic tenets of the approach are that learning is facilitated if the learner discovers rather than remembers or repeats, In other words, it supports the idea that students must take part in their learning by taking their responsibilities to choose their own strategies rather than repeating inputs from the teacher.

**"Repetition consumes time and encourages the scattered mind to remain scattered" (Richards and Rogers, 1986, 102).**

The learning process in this foreign language teaching method is aided by physical objects such as colour coded pronunciation charts, especially rods "Cuisenaire rods" , with different lengths and colours for the sake of improving students' ability to recall and illustrate meaning. (Richards and Rogers, 1986).

**"Rods, colour –coded pronunciation charts (...) create memorable images to facilitate students' recall. Those visual devices serve as associative mediators for students learning and recall"**

**(Richards and Rogers, 1986, 100).**

Cattegno's silent way is based on the premise that the teacher should be as silent as possible in classroom in order to encourage students to produce speech as much as they can .In addition , this approach stresses the use of problem solving activities and consider them to be central to learning and better than learning through memorization.

The silent way method aims at:

**"- Enable student's to answer questions about themselves (family, travelling, education) and speak with a good accent;**

- Speakers of the target language can perform adequately in spelling , grammar , reading and writing "**

**(Richards and Rogers, 1986, 104).**

As with other teaching methods, however, the apparent lack of communication in this approach has been criticized by many scholars, arguing that this lack is due to the over emphasis on teacher's silence and with only motivating students to generate real communication by using rods. In this case, students aren't exposed to any kind of oral input.

### **A.I.5.The Total Physical Response (TPR)**

A teaching method developed by James J.Asher to aid learning foreign languages .This method relies on the assumption that learning a foreign or a second language is through a process similar to the first language development.

**"TPR worked from a premise that adult second language learning could have similar developmental patterns to that of child language acquisition" (Harmer, J, 2001, 90).**

In the same trend, Richards and Rogers (1986) argue that:

**"Asher sees successful adult second language learning as a parallel process to child first language acquisition" (p 87).**

So, if the child learns his first language from speech in form of commands to perform actions , then adults will learn best in that way too ( Harmer , j, 2001).

**"Adults should recapitulate the processes by which children acquire their mother tongue" (Richards and Rogers, 1986, 87).**

According to TPR, students respond to commands that require physical movements .As a result, imperatives are the main structures to transfer or communicate information. **(Richards and Rogers, 1986).**

TPR is categorized under the rubric of the comprehension based approaches; it supports the idea of listening comprehension before the oral production .Students in TPR classrooms are asked to understand the spoken language before developing the skills of speaking **(Richards and Rogers, 1986).** They deduce that:

**"Comprehension abilities precede productive skills in learning a language, the teaching of speaking should be delayed until comprehension skills are established" (p, 87).**

Besides these basic principles, proponents of TPR add that an essential condition for the realization of a successful language learning which is the total absence of stress and anxiety from the teaching/ learning situation .Students aren't forced to speak, but are allowed an individual readiness period with a spontaneously begin to speak when they feel comfortable and confident in understanding and producing the utterances **(Richards and Rogers, 1986).**

**"Teaching should minimize learners' stress" (p, 88).**

Critics of TPR point out that this teaching method may only be appropriate for beginners, it is insufficient to cope with other situations, this later was quoted by (Harmer, 2001)

**"Asher himself says it should be included together with other methods"**

**(P, 90)**

This method is said to be based on stimulus –response model, this latter explains that oral comprehension is expressed through physical responses to command, and this view had been abandoned since "comments and actions " concepts did not reflect the way native speakers use the language .Nonetheless, despite the strong belief of the importance of comprehension in language learning, but Asher in his TPR doesn't give care to relate between comprehension, production and communication. Students are not generally given the opportunity to express their own thoughts in a creative way.

### **A.I.6. The Communicative Approach**

The Communicative approach or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of second or foreign languages .CLT was partly in response to many leading scholars ' proclamation about the need for a critical re-consultation of the way foreign languages were taught .It was described by Harmer (2001) to be :

**"A set of beliefs which included not only a re examination of what aspects of language to teach, but also a shift in emphasis in how to teach "**

**( P, 84) .**

Communicative Language Teaching places great emphasis on helping students to use the target language in a variety of places and contexts as well as on learning language functions (Harmer, J, 2001).It's main focus is on helping learners create meaning rather than helping them develop perfectly grammatical structures or acquire native like pronunciation .This means that this approach supports the idea that success in teaching a foreign language depends on how well learners have developed their communicative "competence " ; a term first introduced by Hyme(1972) then expanded upon by Canal and Swain (1980) .This communicative competence is the learners' ability to apply knowledge of both formal and sociolinguistic aspects of language with adequate proficiency to communicate .(littlewood, 1995).

Due to Communicative Language Teaching, the nature of listening and speaking has been greatly recognized.

**"The active nature of listening means that, no less than in speaking, the learner must be motivated by communicative purposes".(littlewood, 1995,67).**

Hence, it is usually characterized as approach to teaching rather than a teaching method, to include a set of classroom practices.

**"The scope of CLT has expanded; both American and British proponents see it as an approach, not only a method that aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching "**

**(Richards and Rogers, 1986, 66).**

In addition to what was cited above, CLT attempts to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom in order to show the learners' need and desire to connect between the language as it is taught in their classes and as it used to be outside .this lead to one among the most important characteristics of the Communicative



Approach , it is the use of "authenticity" in classroom through different activities to be performed such as role plays and simulation.( Harmer, J, 2001).

According to Harmer (2001), pair and group work require negotiation and cooperation between learners, roles plays in which students practice and develop their language functions .However, not all courses that utilize Communicative Language approach will restrict their activities solely to these.

Despite the CLT importance to bring up a real communication as well as developing the oral language skills (listening and speaking ) , but still it was criticized by many scholars for paying insufficient attention to the context in which teaching and learning take place .

**"Reports abound on the practical difficulties of implementing a communicative approach when teaching English in English-as-a-foreign language (EFL) settings. These settings are the environments in which students have little exposure to English outside the classroom. Some reports attribute the failure of the approach to inadequacies of the teachers themselves. Part of the problem stems from the instructors' misunderstanding of the very nature of communicative language teaching (CLT). Thus, it is found that even when using textbooks designed for communicative activities, teachers tended to revert to traditional teacher-centered routines. Teacher trainers sometimes simply fail to equip teachers with the skills and techniques they need for implementing CLT in their classrooms."**

(Deckert, G, 2004, 1).

#### **A.I.7. The importance of the oral language in EFL classroom**

Oral language is the greatest use of language and is the basis of communication .At the most basic level , oral language means communicating with other people .Generally speaking , it plays a vital role in helping individuals to gain an understanding of themselves and strengthen their social relationship (Bertram,2002). However, when dealing with the oral language at the level of the classroom and curriculum, we do not mean teaching learners to speak as much as we mean improving their ability to talk and providing them with the skills and the opportunities to communicate more effectively (Hong and Kortner, 1995).

Through listening and speaking students learn to express their thoughts, ideas and feeling. They will be able to participate in society successfully and be involved in the world around them .According to Hotbrook (1993) quoted in Bertram (2002), the oral language competence has three criteria: fluency, clarity, sensitivity and it depends greatly on teachers to help their learners for Improving these levels of development.

Many researches indicate that the development of the oral language has a close relationship with student's thinking capacities, that's why (Stabb, 1986) quoted in (Hong and Kortner, 1995) reminds us about the continuity of literacy learning, he explains that the oral language which children have as the main instrument for learning before school needs to be available while students are at school.

Consequently , oral language is considered to be a very effective link between the learning process and thinking development .It ensures the foundation of other language skills (Bertram,2002) .As students talk about themselves and experiences , they are learning to focus their ideas and to organize their thinking ( Lyle ,1993 quoted in Bertram , 2002 ).For adopting a perfect oral language , it must be given full opportunities to grow in classroom through these foundations .Following (Bertram,2002) ,all the concerned parts in the learning / teaching process should give oral language a big importance by helping students to develop it before achieving proficiency in reading and writing . He considers it one among the most important means of learning and acquiring knowledge.

For realizing the above aims and to facilitate the learning of the oral language, students ' prior knowledge must be taken into account ( their background and every day life experiences) .then in classroom , the programme should be planned to develop necessary skills on the developmental continuum .From this starting point ;

**"The techniques and skills which are taught in classroom program need to be further extended and used across the curriculum , then those oral language program which have been delivered at the classroom level with the policy for the development of language skills must be generalized to be implemented across the whole school" (Bertram, 2002:2).**

### **A.I.8. The reality of the oral language in our classrooms**

Oral language skills remain essential for communication, there is no doubt that we find plenty of this oral language in our classrooms .According to many observations, it is noticed that this oral language development is neglected in classroom and most of the time it is more used by the teacher than by students .Nowadays , classrooms are dominated by teachers' talking and workbook exercises .This phenomenon is named by educators as "teachers –talk, students-listen" or "teacher –dominated" (Hong and Kortner,1995).

Through this continued domination, students in these classrooms are programmed to, a passive learning atmosphere (the teacher talks, the students listen and do their homework).Here students are learning the basic skills of reading and writing. However, they will never learn how to think critically and how to make sound judgments on their own (Hong and Kortner, 1995).

Stabb (1986) quoted in Hong and Kortner (1995) speculates that foreign language teachers are responsible to a certain extent for this weakness in developing the oral language in EFL classrooms because they become involved with established routine, finishing the text book, covering the curriculum and preparing students for standardized tests. Those teachers had forgotten their original goal, that of stimulating thoughts and improve learners' first aid towards a perfect learning realization; concerning language oral skills (listening and speaking).

Teaching English face the same constraints, teachers have the same perspectives and attitudes towards their teaching ,classrooms specifically during the Oral Expression course which normally should be devoted for students ' talk, are characterized by the total domination of teachers talks. The learning environment seems passive with no motivation and interest .Unfortunately, students outcomes in this module at the level of the university ensure that all the aims of reaching a good communicative mood and better listening and speaking performances are far to be fulfilled .This situation is the result of other additional factors which interfere to bloc the way for achieving the course's aims such as the class size, the noticeable shortage of even the most basic teaching aids essential for teaching oral

comprehension ; that is authentic audio and video tapes , language laboratories... in addition to time allotted to develop oral language skills which is claimed to be insufficient .

All in all, we recognize that it is not easy for teachers to teach the oral skills in such a confusing situations, but still they should be aware about all these constraints and must struggle to fill some of those resulting gaps .They have to know that although the focus is on the development of those speaking and listening abilities, students' critical thinking and reasoning capacities also developed along the way (Bertram, 2002).

### **A.I.9. The oral language skills that students need to develop**

Students in the dealing with the process of the oral language development should be confident when communicating in a wide variety of social contexts to a wide variety of audiences .Being effective communicators , they need to be able to adapt and adopt their oral language techniques and content to whatever social contexts they find themselves .For the achievement of all these different tasks , learners should be able to speak about different ideas as well as explore knowledge clearly through enjoyable engagement (Bertram, 2002). They shouldn't only understand, respond to and use oral language effectively in a range of contexts but to respond to others ideas, perspectives and thoughts too.

Learners when developing their oral communication in a foreign language learning classroom need to structure, plan meaningful tasks and experiences within this classroom environment for the reason of acquiring effective listening and speaking abilities or skills. For this acquisition and oral improvement both listening and speaking must be understood , modeled , taught and practiced within the classroom (Bertram, 2002).According to him , those learners should be given chances to learn how to use their oral language for the sake of gathering, processing and presenting information.

Without neglecting the role of the teacher in this development, when saying that teachers' talk domination in EFL classrooms is among the obstacles for achievement, this doesn't mean that the teacher's role is unimportant but the contrary, we present a more demanding tasks for him .His role exceeds telling students what he wants to say or what the

text means, instead the teacher has several and different roles to play (Hong and Kortner, 1995).

- Through his different planned activities in classroom, he should encourage students to bring their knowledge in class, to listen to them with care and being a responsive listener to their speeches.
- Provide the learner with the appropriate environment for his teaching, when they feel free to express themselves without any fear.
- He should provide opportunities for speaking and listening to different resources which fit his learner's level, genre and interest. The teacher must ensure to all his learners an equal and fair chances and opportunities to develop their interpersonal listening and speaking abilities .For that reason, he tends to use all suitable strategies to manage all form of communication like: large and small group discussions, conversation , interviews, storytelling activities and role plays. Without forgetting the role of listening materials such language laboratories, this will involve a range of experience in which the size and type of audience, the situation and purpose will vary.
- He has to be a good model in speaking and an exceptional representation of the oral language.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this first chapter, our investigation has shown that both oral skills namely speaking weren't given much importance in these second/foreign teaching methods, less care is devoted to improve students' oral capacities in the classroom. A clear emphasis was put on gaining input or knowledge of the language with neglecting the way this information would be presented.

We come up through the forgoing chapter to show how the oral language is important and what a great role it has to really develop foreign language student's communicative competence. It is explained that despite the fact that this oral language exists in our classrooms, but still it is adopted by teachers rather than students .Oral language needs a special care from both sides and should be exchanged between them to achieve successful communication.