

## ***Insights from Method Era of EFL Pedagogy into the History of Instructed Speaking Practice***

### ***Historia nauczania produktywnej sprawności mówienia na lekcji języka obcego w świetle analizy wybranych metod nauczania języka angielskiego***

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#### **Keywords**

language skills, foreign language speaking, foreign language teaching, Method Era

#### **Słowa kluczowe**

sprawności językowe, mówienie w języku obcym, nauczanie języków obcych, podejście metodyczne

#### **Abstract**

EFL speaking, a productive oral skill combining various types of knowledge and subskills, is regarded as a central language ability in the *lingua-franca* era of English. Having stressed the difficulty with acquiring the ability to speak, we aim to provide a historical account of how EFL speaking was approached in instructed settings by investigating ten most popular methods selected from Method Era of EFL Pedagogy. The key assumptions underlying each method are discussed, proving that historically speaking practice – in spite of the fact that it has been rarely marginalised by its sister skills with the exception of the pre-Reform Movement or cognitive psychology-oriented periods – was not an effective and successful endeavour in Method Era of FLT. Nevertheless, we would like to point out that this seemingly unavailing period has produced illuminating insights which nowadays can be successfully applied in FL classroom contexts.

## Abstrakt

Umiejętność mówienia w języku angielskim jako obcym, produktywna sprawność wymagająca opanowania różnego rodzaju wiedzy i umiejętności, jest uważana za kluczową w czasach, gdy język angielski spełnia rolę *lingua franca*. Zwróciwszy uwagę na złożoność sprawności mówienia, przedstawiamy historię nauczania tej sprawności w świetle dziesięciu wybranych metod nauczania języków obcych. Omawiamy główne założenia każdej z nich, pokazując, iż, pomimo że ćwiczenie mówienia rzadko odgrywało drugorzędną rolę w procesie nauczania języka docelowego, takie podejście nie przynosiło wielu korzyści z punktu widzenia rozwoju kompetencji językowych w kontekście komunikacji ustnej. Jednakże chcemy również podkreślić fakt, iż glottodydaktyczna kłęska większości omówionych w artykule metod stanowi jednocześnie źródło wielu informacji przydatnych z punktu widzenia nauczania mówienia, które z powodzeniem mogą zostać wykorzystane na lekcji języka obcego.

## Insights from Method Era of EFL Pedagogy into the History of Instructed Speaking Practice

### Rationale

Despite a general conviction that all language abilities should equally contribute to the development of learners' knowledge of a foreign language (FL), a marked tendency towards a growing advantage of one of the language skills, speaking, over its sister skills could be noticed (Chastain, 1971; Eckman, 2008; Erdonmez, 2014; Lazaraton, 2001; Komorowska, 2005; Nation, 2011; Thornbury, 2006). The significance of the ability to speak can be assessed having considered some persuasive evidence accumulated outside and inside instructed settings. To begin with, Eckman (2018) refers to the process of first language acquisition (FLA) and the natural order with which productive skills are acquired in speakers' native language (L1). The scholar pertains that the importance of spoken language lies in the fact that the development of the ability to produce speech precedes that of writing<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, a distinctive characteristic of a speech production process concerns its spontaneity. Even though the features of speech described by scholars (Brown & Yule, 1983; Bygate, 1987; Lazaraton, 2001; Thornbury, 2005, 2006; Tonkyn, 2000; Wróbel, 2011) point to a seemingly less complex lexico-grammatical structure of oral language, the issue of time pressure, connected with Levelt's (1989) four-stage model of speech production<sup>2</sup>, works to the severe disadvantage of speakers. Thirdly, Bailey (2003) and other researchers (Byrne, 1976; Thornbury, 2005) underlie the fact that even though L1 speaking is innate, a lot of effort has to be put by (FL) teachers and learners for speech production to be practiced and mastered by the latter in instructed settings (Rivers, 1968). It is, therefore, frequently highlighted that FL speaking is an amalgamate of different types of knowledge (e.g.: grammar, lexis, sounds, prosody, culture, speech acts) and subskills (e.g.: phonological skills, speech function skills, interaction management skills) (Boonkit, 2010; Brown, 2001; Brown & Bown, 2014; Bygate, 1987, 2009; Canale & Swain, 1980; Chastain,

<sup>1</sup> The scholar attributes a primary role to speaking to the disadvantage of writing, stating that speech production "reflects a living, linguistic system that is a part of the natural world, just as lightning, the rotation of the earth and gravity are" (Eckman, 2018, p. 25).

<sup>2</sup> Levelt's (1989) monolingual model accounts for speech production in L1, isolating such stages as conceptualisation, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring.

1971; Erdonmez, 2014; Gilakjani, 2011; Goh & Burns, 2012; Gower, Phillips, & Walters, 1995; Tarone, 2005; Thornbury, 2005; Wilson, 2014). Another important reason explaining the severe difficulty with mastering speaking is the fact that “spontaneous verbal expression is not solely a product of knowledge and skill in using a language code” (Rivers, 1968, p. 192). Thus, it is also the effect of psychological constructs, such as willingness to communicate (WTC), language anxiety, self-efficacy or motivation, that should be considered (Khan & Khattak, 2011; Linnebrick & Pintrich, 2003; Mills, 2014; Nerlicki, 2011; Pawlak, 2011; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2011).

Even though the above-mentioned arguments confirm the superiority of speech over its written counterpart, changing attitudes towards the teaching of language skills have prevailed in the three periods of a FL instruction<sup>3</sup>. The earliest, Pre-Method Era, which developed between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, was characterised by a common-sense based, intuitive and highly personal character of teaching practices (Kelly, 1969). The subsequent preoccupation with systematic and scientifically relevant ways of FL teaching gave birth to the concept of a method, which became the driving force behind the second period, Method Era, spanning between the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. It, disparagingly referred to by Brown (2002) as the Dark Ages of foreign language teaching (FLT), did not win positive recognition after a period of mostly futile FL education. Even though some scholars (e.g.: Cerezal Sierra, 1995) believe that a method provides the bridge between theory and practice in classroom settings, it has been heavily criticised for being not only too prescriptive or politically-motivated, but also prone to excessive generalisations and empirical validation (Brown, 2002). Decades of ineffective method-based FL teaching practices unsuitable for an increasingly varied groups of learners encouraged scholars to stress the need for a novel kind of instruction, at the same time marking the “Death of Method”. Recently, Kumaravadivelu (2006) and many other researchers (e.g.: Nunan, 1991) have made it evident that one method cannot provide effective teaching in all educational contexts, therefore Post-Method Era teachers have been advised to individually consider a number of principles<sup>4</sup> that enable them to adjust their teaching to unique FL instructed settings.

<sup>3</sup> Howatt and Smith (2014) offer a different periodisation approach to FLT methods. They differentiate between two stages, *Modern Language Teaching in Europe* (1750-1920) and *English Language Teaching beyond and within Europe* (1920-2000+), further divided into *Classical* and *Reform Periods* as well as *Scientific* and *Communicative Periods* respectively.

<sup>4</sup> The three concepts put forward by Kumaravadivelu (2006) help FL teachers individualise teaching techniques used in a classroom. The first, particularity, takes into account local, socio-cultural and political features of a location in which the FL

As indicated above, Method Era sparked a lively controversy among FL teaching professionals. Nevertheless, we are convinced that there are many reasons in favour of referring to a method for the purpose of tracing the history of instructed speaking practice. First, a method is said to reflect the current state of knowledge on the language and attitudes towards the role of non-linguistic aspects in language learning, such as social relationships, cultural awareness or psychological constructs. Second, it is a part of the paradigm which requires empirical (research), theoretical (theory) as well as practical (classroom practice) considerations (Cerezal Sierra, 1995, p. 112). Third, a method is characterised by its complementary and contradictory character which is found useful in constructing a complete picture of a FL classroom (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Even though a vast number of publications (e.g.: Alemi & Tavakoli, 2015; Brown, 1994, 2001, 2002; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996; Cerezal Sierra, 1995; Hinkel, 2006, 2012; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Komorowska, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Liu & Shi, 2007; Nunan, 1991; Oxford, 2001; Thornbury, 2006; Richard & Rodgers, 1986; Rodgers, 2001) have been already devoted to a detailed discussion of EFL<sup>5</sup> methodology, allowing for the presentation of its assumptions, procedures and critique, there is a dearth of research specifically investigating methods with regard to EFL speaking. Since the development of the ability to speak in English is not only a highly desirable, but also a challenging endeavour, we believe that it is particularly insightful to investigate the approaches to oral language production in the context of instructed EFL speaking practice with the help of the concept of a method.

Thus, the objectives of the present paper are twofold: (1) to provide a historical perspective on the teaching of speaking by analysing selected methods in FLT, including Classical Method, Grammar-Translation Method, Series Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Cognitive Code Learning, Silent Way, Total Physical Response, Natural Approach, and Communicative Language Teaching, and (2) to draw pedagogical implications concerning speaking practice in instructed settings based on the critical evaluation of selected methods.

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teaching takes place. The second, possibility, puts in the centre of attention learners' socio-cultural and socio-political backgrounds. The last parameter, practicality, encourages teachers to take responsibility for producing their own theory of practice which reflects their students' needs, backgrounds and experiences.

<sup>5</sup> English as a foreign language.

## EFL speaking in Method Era

The earliest accounts concerning the dawning of Method Era, dating back to times when the teaching of Latin and Greek was the focus of FL instruction, utterly disregarded the role of oral language in the process of FLT (Brown, 1994; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011)<sup>6</sup>. The first method to be developed with the aim of teaching a FL was *Classical Method*. It heavily relied on the use of grammar- and vocabulary-oriented exercises. Learners' theoretical knowledge of grammatical rules, vocabulary, declensions and conjugations was to enable them to perform translation-based activities. The utter negligence of teaching oracy combined with the use of students' mother tongue as a means of instruction did not allow students to develop their ability to speak. The spirit fostered by the method was revived again when its 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent, *Grammar-Translation Method*, was introduced. Similarly to its predecessor, GMT exercised a very limited number of techniques to teach the TL. Its distinguishable feature was the use of dictionaries as the basis for performing grammatical and lexical exercises. As far as the ultimate goal of instruction is concerned, learners were only to acquire the ability to read and translate texts written in a FL. Since the fluent and accurate production of oral language was not pursued in GTM-oriented instructed settings, speaking was not taught<sup>7</sup>.

After a long period of ambivalence towards speaking, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century classrooms witnessed a radical change in the attitude towards oracy. Teaching programmes encouraging students to parrot sets of grammatical rules in the context of reading and writing practice were replaced by the guidelines of *Series Method* (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Liu & Shi, 2007). Accordingly, the process of FL learning was to bear a close resemblance to FLA with language being equated to a set of simple actions. With no translations into L1, additional explanations or deductive teaching of grammar, learners were to display the mastery of connected sentences, for instance "I walk towards the door. I draw near to the door. I draw nearer to the door. I stop at the door" (Brown, 2001, p. 20). Even though *Series Method* underlined the importance

<sup>6</sup> The significance of oral language, however, was stressed as early as in the Antiquity. Kelly (1969) pertains that "the ancients were suspicious of any 'silent' use of language, be it musing, praying, or even reading. In the schoolroom, reading, though necessarily concerned with content, was directed to the skills of speech and delivery, as they were an important part of the skills of the orator" (Kelly, 1969, p. 97).

<sup>7</sup> Brown (2001) concludes that "little thought was given at the time to teaching someone how to speak the language; after all, languages were not being taught primarily to learn oral/aural communication, but to learn for the sake of being 'scholarly' or, in some instances, for gaining a reading proficiency in a foreign language" (Brown, 2001, p. 18).

of speaking previously marginalised by Classical and Grammar-Translation Methods, it was Reform Movement that became the important milestone for defining the central place of the spoken language (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996, p. 3). Not only did Reform Movement allow for the establishment of Phonetics as a scientific field of study, but it also led to the formulation of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) which offered an exact representation of speech sounds in a given language by means of written symbols. Under the influence of Series Method and Reform Movement, a new method, called Direct Method (also known as Berlitz Method), was devised in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It promoted the use of a FL as a means of instruction, utterly disregarding the role of students' L1 in the classroom. It strongly encouraged student-student as well as teacher-student interaction to take place in a FL. Instructed practice was to resemble the process of L1 learning, therefore, an emphasis was placed on oral communication, inductive teaching of grammar, modelling of new structures and their subsequent production.

With the World War II stressing the need for international communication, the rise of structuralism and the adoption of behavioural approach to psychology, a method which could keep pace with the recent trends was developed. Audio-Lingual Method, adopted in the United States, and its British counterpart, Oral Approach provided a psychological perspective on the process of FL learning, putting an equality sign between habit formation and language teaching (Alemi & Tavakoli, 2015; Celce-Murcia et al., 1996; Liu & Shi, 2007). Audiolingualism presupposed that language learning, just as the development of a habit, took place with the help of stimuli and responses, as a result of which any kind of behaviour had to involve an appropriate response. Drawing heavily from psychology, learners' positive language behaviours were praised while negative ones deserved punishment. Structuralism, which presented language as "a system of structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning, the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, structures, and sentence types" also took its toll on the audio-lingual methodology since the notion of building blocks, defined as the elements of language to be combined together by means of rules, was introduced (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 49). A lot of attention was paid to the practice of oral language with the help of dialogues and drills, which memorised and frequently produced, were to ensure the development of learners' oral proficiency.

Another crucial development in the field of linguistics, Chomsky's concept of transformational-generative grammar combined with the rise of cognitive psychology, affected the conceptualisation of instructed FL learning, resulting in the arrival of Cognitive Code Learning. Following the



guidelines of CCL, the idea of habit formation in language learning was abandoned for the sake of grammar rules and vocabulary learning (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). While defining Cognitive Code Learning theory, Hinkel (2012) remarks that it “is largely seen as an updated variety of the traditional grammar-translation method, with an attendant goal of overcoming the shortfalls of the audio-lingual approach” (Hinkel, 2012, p. 625). Thus, the interest into the practises promoted by Grammar-Translation Method was renewed, drawing the attention to courses guided by grammar-centred syllabi and rules explanations. Even though Cognitive Code Learning introduced profound changes to FL classrooms, the common use of drills bore evidence to the continuing presence of Audio-Lingual Method.

1970s deserve a particular attention due to the unprecedented significance of second language learning and its eventual acknowledgement as a scientific discipline (Brown, 2001). A series of attempts were made to develop the most effective teaching methods with three most distinctive, Silent Way, Total Physical Response and Natural Approach, being selected for the purpose of the current discussion<sup>8</sup>. The followers of Silent Way pointed out that the most efficient way for teaching a FL was achieved when teachers strictly limited the amount of verbal communication with their students. Instead, it was learners who were to interact with each other using a FL. Very rare instances of teachers’ active involvement or corrective feedback during classroom activities required the reliance on such notions as discovery learning, induction, and problem-solving tasks. Total Physical Response<sup>9</sup>, on the other hand, put into the centre of attention the significance of motor action as a key factor reinforcing students’ retention of grammatical and lexical structures. Since FL instruction primarily focused on the receptive aural skill, students were not encouraged to produce any oral responses at the very beginning of a FL instruction. TPR aimed at the provision of a safe classroom environment in order to help learners overcome their fear of speaking. Natural Approach emphasised the significance of comprehensible input, according to which language reception was believed to contribute to language acquisition<sup>10</sup>. Learners were thought to go through three stages, that is,

<sup>8</sup> The common feature characterising three designer methods was their strong reliance on the process of FLA to account for how a FL should be taught. Thus, the acquisition of oracy skills, encompassing two early language abilities, listening and speaking, was given precedence over the remaining language skills.

<sup>9</sup> James Asher’s concept of TPR is based on the psychological theory of “trace learning” according to which memory is improved when it is stimulated by motor activity (Brown, 2001, p. 30).

<sup>10</sup> Krashen (1985) highlights the significance of language reception in his Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, stressing that listening and reading contribute to language



first, the pre-production stage in which they were exposed to comprehensible input; second, the early production stage<sup>11</sup> in which they attempted to produce language and, third, extended production in which they were involved in more elaborate language production. Attention was paid to the provision of a relaxed atmosphere to increase students' oral output. In accordance with the concept of Silent Period, students were not pushed to speak, but rather they were given time for FL speech to emerge on its own.

A radical departure from structuralism-oriented, cognitive or affective approaches to FLT was gradually made to welcome the arrival of Communicative Language Teaching which took advantage of the functional and interactive views on language learning. The method highlighted the utility of real-life, that is authentic and spontaneous, interaction in teaching a FL. Meaningful tasks based on information sharing, negotiation of meaning or problem solving practices were designed and they, combined with authentic materials, were to ensure effective FL education. In contrast to Audiolingualism which foregrounded the significance of linguistic competence, CLT popularised the concept of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980), encompassing three constructs, grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. The first one provided users with information on the structure of the TL, that is its syntactical, phonological and morphological rules. Sociolinguistic and strategic competences, on the other hand, enabled learners to respectively produce language that was linguistically and culturally adjusted to a given context and to handle communication breakdowns which necessitated the use of reformulation- or repetition-based strategies. CLT also made a welcome diversion from accuracy-oriented teaching to the advantage of fluency practice in the context of unrehearsed language production.

Far from being exhaustive, the table below lists ten methods selected from Method Era of EFL Pedagogy. Each of them is discussed with reference to its objectives, theories of learning and the significance of speaking practice.

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acquisition. Swain (1985), on the other hand, states that FL reception, speaking and writing, is not sufficient since language production is deemed crucial in improving learners' FL fluency.

<sup>11</sup> During that stage teachers focus on meaning rather than form, therefore no attention is paid to corrective feedback and errors are treated as a natural component of a learning process. Such an attitude to error correction stands in stark contrast to audiolingual methodology which aims at complete elimination of errors from students' spoken and written output.

Method	Objectives	Theory of learning	Attention to speaking	Kind of speaking practice
Classical Method / Grammar-Translation Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ reception and production of written texts</li> <li>▪ translation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ FL proficiency viewed as learners' ability to translate texts from their L1 to a FL, and vice versa</li> <li>▪ teaching centred around vocabulary and grammar learning</li> <li>▪ no attention to oral communication in a FL</li> <li>▪ classes conducted in students' L1</li> </ul>	NO	-
Series Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ learning a language through communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ teaching imitates the process of FLA</li> <li>▪ no translations, grammatical rules and explanations</li> </ul>	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ memorisation of connected sentences</li> </ul>
Direct Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ learning a FL through communication</li> <li>▪ pronunciation</li> <li>▪ grammar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ teaching imitates the process of FLA</li> <li>▪ focus on spontaneous interaction</li> <li>▪ language limited to speech</li> <li>▪ no translations</li> <li>▪ inductive teaching of grammar</li> <li>▪ concrete and associative teaching of vocabulary</li> <li>▪ demonstrations, actions and pictures used to make meanings clear</li> </ul>	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ learning everyday vocabulary and phrases</li> <li>▪ question-and-answer chains,</li> <li>▪ dictation and imitation</li> <li>▪ dialogues and anecdotes</li> </ul>
Audio-Lingual Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ learning a language through communication</li> <li>▪ speaking</li> <li>▪ pronunciation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ language learning perceived as habit formation</li> <li>▪ emphasis on over-learning, or learning to answer automatically</li> <li>▪ memorisation to eliminate errors</li> </ul>	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ speaking drills:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expansion drills</li> <li>- repetition drills</li> <li>- transformation drills</li> <li>- question and answer drills</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ pattern practice</li> <li>▪ dialogues memorisation</li> </ul>

	Cognitive Code Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ grammar</li> <li>▪ rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ combination of ALM and GTM</li> <li>▪ deductive teaching of grammar</li> <li>▪ use of drills</li> <li>▪ provision of rules and explanations</li> <li>▪ grammar and vocabulary exercises</li> </ul>	NO	-
Designer Methods	Silent Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ pronunciation</li> <li>▪ grammar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ teachers remain silent, using gestures to communicate with learners</li> <li>▪ no feedback</li> <li>▪ little attention to error correction</li> <li>▪ emphasis on student-student interaction</li> <li>▪ discovery learning</li> <li>▪ inductive teaching</li> </ul>	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ problem-solving tasks</li> <li>▪ pair- and group-work</li> </ul>
	Total Physical Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ developing oracy skills</li> <li>▪ use of imperatives</li> <li>▪ reliance on mimicry and gestures</li> <li>▪ grammar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ meaning conveyed through acting, mimicry and gestures</li> <li>▪ motor action believed to reinforce students' memory of lexis and grammar</li> <li>▪ provision of a safe, stress-free environment</li> <li>▪ verbal responses from students initially not required</li> <li>▪ learning a FL through fun</li> </ul>	YES (preceded by listening)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ language input aids spoken fluency</li> <li>▪ imperatives</li> <li>▪ dramas</li> </ul>
	Natural Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ comprehensible input</li> <li>▪ developing oracy skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ relaxed atmosphere in a classroom to enhance speaking</li> <li>▪ use of TPR at the beginning of instruction</li> <li>▪ learning a language through communication</li> </ul>	YES (preceded by listening)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ yes or no responses</li> <li>▪ one-word answers</li> <li>▪ discussions</li> <li>▪ games</li> <li>▪ group-work</li> </ul>

Communica- tive Language Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ communicative competence</li> <li>▪ learning a language through communication</li> <li>▪ authenticity of language and materials</li> <li>▪ developing fluency;</li> <li>▪ spontaneity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ FL as a means of communication in the classroom</li> <li>▪ emphasis placed on interaction, information-sharing, negotiation-of-meaning- or problem-solving tasks</li> <li>▪ active participation of learners required in the classroom</li> <li>▪ functional syllabus is followed</li> <li>▪ attention paid to the four skills from the beginning of instruction</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ spontaneous production of language</li> <li>▪ role-plays reflecting real-life situations</li> <li>▪ games</li> <li>▪ pair- and group-work activities</li> </ul>
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Table 1. Overview of selected methods with reference to their objectives, theories of learning and speaking practice (self-prepared).

As seen above, the notion of structural grammar-driven teaching programmes aiming at speakers' increased awareness of rules, such as Classical Method, Grammar-Translation Method and Cognitive Code Learning, have intermingled with less formal syllabi considering a more affective, for instance Designer Methods, or interactive, including Direct Method or Communicative Language Teaching, side of language learning. Even though methodological guidelines prescribing (presumably!) effective FL teaching have undergone pendulum swings with the place of language forms, functions and skills in the FL curriculum being repeatedly reversed, one commonality might be established. In spite of initial disgrace of speaking marginalised by traditional, cognitive or structural approaches to FLT, this productive skill has regained popularity since Reform Movement and has continued to almost unwaveringly maintain its status as a fundamental language skill.

Figure 1 gives a historical overview of the importance of speaking practice in Method Era with regard to ten methods selected for the purpose of the current discussion. Their analysis indicates that only three of them, Classical Method, Grammar-Translation Method and Cognitive Code Learning, disregarded the role of speaking in developing students FL proficiency (marked red on the diagram).

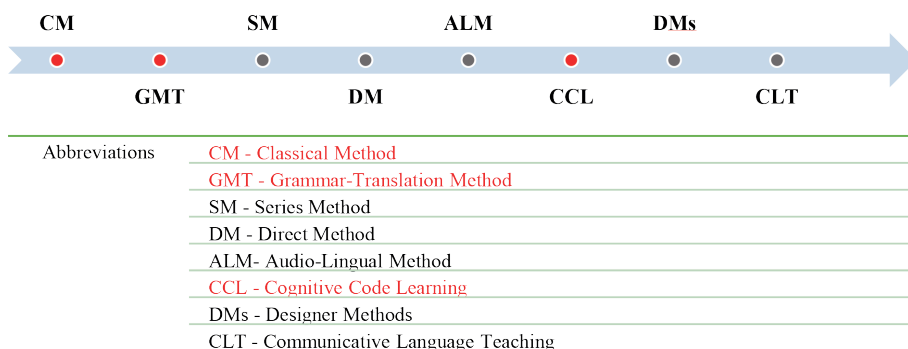


Figure 1. Overview of selected methods with reference to the importance of speaking (self-prepared).

FLT programmes organised in accordance with the assumptions underlying Series Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Designer Methods and Communicative Language Teaching placed enormous stress on improving learners' ability to speak in English as a foreign language. Their founders and proponents recognised the significance of well-developed speaking, devising and applying ever new techniques, which as later proven however, either did not contribute to FL learners' oral proficiency at all or just allowed them to achieve very rudimental oral language skills based on the reproduction of memorised, ready-made chunks of language.

To support the points made above, it is worthwhile reinvestigating selected methods. First of all, in spite of the chief preoccupation of ALM with oral language production by means of dialogues memorisation and drilling, which were believed to be vital to the success of the method, the concept of overlearning and behavioural views on FL learning were its main weakness leading to the inevitable failure of students unable to achieve long-term communicative competence (Aleami & Tavakoli, 2015). Second of all, even though Silent Way took its pride in promoting learners' autonomy and independence, it attracted serious criticism with regard to the lack of opportunities for communicative competence to be developed since it "was too harsh a method, and the teacher too distant, to encourage communicative atmosphere" (Brown, 2001, p. 29). Similarly, TPR, which due to the imperative-centred language teaching and no solution found as to how present more abstract and complex linguistic items, was very successful only in the initial stages and could not teach oral language to more advanced learners. Moreover, the most frequent criticism concerning Natural Approach was connected with the promotion of Silent Period in the classroom. The questions frequently posed by the opponents of the concept aimed to examine the consequences

of situations in which learners had never been ready or willing to speak. Finally, even though the theoretical foundations of CLT seemed solid, being built on the evidence accumulated by its methodological predecessors, the method did not manage to escape criticism. One of the most frequent accusations concerned the dominance of fluency over accuracy. The relationship between these two concepts is intricate because learners' attempts to improve their speech in terms of grammatical, lexical or phonological correctness usually have a negative impact on their fluency. Similarly, speakers' excessive preoccupation with the communication of their message might put at stake the accuracy of their utterances. CLT proved that too much attention paid to a fluency-oriented performance was not synonymous with successful speaking. It was rather just the opposite since students' inadequate knowledge of FL grammatical rules made their speech apparently fluent, yet hardly manageable in terms of comprehension (Hinkel, 2006).

Figure 2 shows that even though seven methods discussed in the present paper emphasised the practice of speaking, the majority of them did not prove helpful in sharpening students' speaking skill (marked red on the diagram).

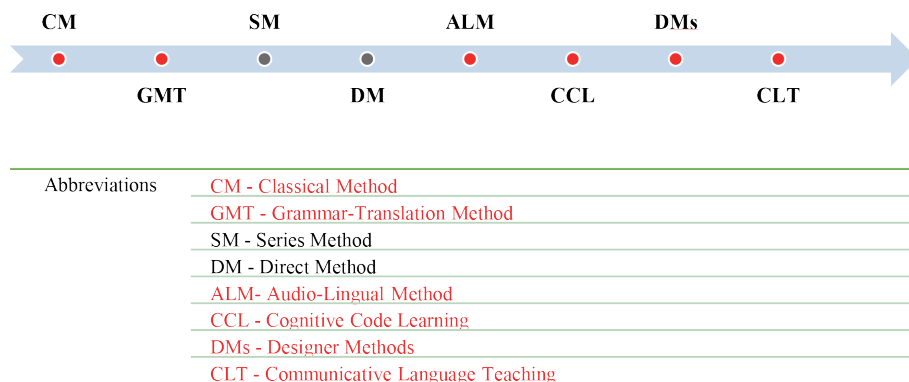


Figure 2. Overview of selected EFL methods with reference to their effectiveness in teaching speaking (self-prepared).

## Future directions

Paying attention to spoken output, or oral language production, seems crucial once we have considered the fact that written and spoken input is not satisfactory in the context of developing linguistic proficiency. Since “students in a foreign-language class will not learn to speak fluently merely by hearing speech” (Rivers, 1968, p. 160), learners cannot master their ability to

speak in a FL unless they practice and produce oral language (Rivers, 1968). The presentation of the history of EFL instructed speaking practice in the context of ten methods supported the view that a good speaking skill has undoubtedly been regarded as a valuable asset with the majority of them, seven out of ten, establishing the mastery of speaking as a vital goal of their instruction.

Nevertheless, the process of FL speech production usually has a detrimental effect on the skill of speaking itself. Since oral language is produced in real time and an utterance is based on the preceding one, the contingent aspect of speaking is determined, conditioning its spontaneous (Thornbury, 2005), instantaneous (Wilson, 2014) and transient character (Bygate, 1987). Consequently, the processes of speech planning and production usually coincide in time with the burden placed on speakers' cognitive and linguistic resources because they have to, first, conceptualise (content knowledge), then, formulate (linguistic knowledge) and, finally, produce speech (knowledge of sounds and prosody) (Bygate, 1987; Thornbury, 2006; Tonkyn, 2000). Apart from speaking necessitating a simultaneous application of different kinds of knowledge and subskills, it is also conditioned by a variety of student- (e.g.: their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, personality traits, learning style, amount of knowledge on a specific topic, exposure to the TL), teacher- (e.g.: their qualifications and teaching expertise, teaching and learning materials, their beliefs and attitudes towards the teaching of speaking) and context- (e.g.: the role of the TL in the community, the national language policy, the national core curriculum, language examinations) related factors to be considered by FL instructors in classroom settings.

Due to the intractable nature of speaking encompassing its language- and non-language-related underpinnings, the proponents of selected methods did not devise appropriate techniques, – drills, dialogues memorisation, overlearning, imperatives, Silent Period, fluency-oriented speaking tasks – which could take into account the intricacy of FL speech production phenomenon, consequently proving ineffective in teaching the skill in question to EFL learners. Although Method Era did not provide a representative example of a perfect FL instruction, its history and achievements should be well-known to FL theoreticians and practitioners since despite its glottodidactic inefficiency with regard to teaching EFL speaking, it has provided a valuable source of insights into the nature of FLT and the ability to speak itself.

It is, therefore, particularly useful to capitalise on the legacy left by this apparently ineffective, yet highly instructive period in the history of FL speaking practice, whose selected themes, such as the role of positive emotions stressed by Natural Approach or Total Physical Response, spontaneity



advocated by Direct Method or Communicative Language Teaching, and classroom interaction underlined by Silent Way, echo in today's features characterising successful EFL classroom activities. Many researchers (Cockett & Fox, 1999; Cervantes, 2009; Gaudart, 1999; Gąsior, 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b; Klippel, 1984; Macedonia, 2005; Siek-Piskozub, 1994, 1995, 2001; Underhill, 1987; Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2006) have therefore pointed to storytelling- and game-based tasks which evidently combine three above-mentioned concepts. Their potential have been repeatedly investigated in a substantial number of empirical studies which revealed that storytelling and games increase the speakers' level of motivation during FL speaking (see Bettiol, 2001; Girardelli, 2017; Leon & Cely, 2010) and contribute to a more successful oral performance of experimental groups in comparison to control groups (see As, 2016; Marzuki, Prayogo, & Wahyudi 2016; Zare-Behtash, Saed, & Sajjadi, 2016). Certainly, it must be stressed here that FL speaking skills development should not and, at the same time, cannot be limited to storytelling- and game-like tasks only since there is a wide range of methods and techniques (for instance those based on Content and Language Integrated Learning or Computer Assisted Language Learning) that are also worth analysing.

To conclude, only by searching for individualised ways of teaching speaking, experimenting with the existing classroom teaching techniques and, most importantly, learning from the past theoretical and empirical research into FLT and second language acquisition (SLA) theories can an appropriate response to the controversy surrounding speaking, according to which its intricacy impedes on instructed teaching and learning processes, be made.

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