A Critical Approach to ‘Old’ and ‘New” Trends in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Prof. dr Igor Lakić
University of Montenegro
Goal

- Communicating in a foreign language
- How to reach the goal?
- What tools do we have at our disposal to reach the goal?
Knowledge vs Use

- Competence = language knowledge
- Performance = language use
PPP Model

- Presentation
- Practice
- Production

Teachers controlled

Students controlled
PPP Model

- Presentation – short; can include practice too
- Practice – exercises to practice the presented material
- Production – use (discussion, role play, story telling... )
PPP Model

- Restrictive?
- Prescriptive?
- Too much presentation and too little production?

- Montenegrin situation
Communicative model

• Enabling communication in a foreign language
• Accuracy?
• Disadvantages
  – do students always learn in that way?
  - can students make a conclusion without being given an explanation?
Lexico-grammatical approach

- Widdowson, IATEFL East, 1996
- Rod Ellis
- Return of grammar and vocabulary in teaching English
- How?
Another brick in the wall?
Grammar

- YES, we have to teach grammar
- Grammar is not the goal, but a way to reach the goal
- How do we check the knowledge of grammar?
- Language use – say it!
Vocabulary

- YES, we have to teach vocabulary
- Individual words
- Collocations
- Colligations – grammar form and use
- Synonyms or translations?
- Context
- Language use
Translation

• YES, we have to use translation as a tool for learning English
• It supports learning the language
• Translation of English texts into Montenegrin
• What do my students say?
Translation

- A way to teach grammar (including syntax) and vocabulary in context
- Students learn by contrasting and comparing
- A way to avoid interference of mother tongue
- Students feel they have grasped the meaning properly
Translation

- Translation in the classroom:
  - testing
  - identifying errors, problems
  - learning

A test with 3rd year students of International Relations and Diplomacy at the Faculty of Political Science
Translation

- Rečeno mi je da nećete biti u kancelariji.
- I was told that you would not be in your office.

* (1) It tolded to me that he doesn’t be in office.
* (2) It was told me that you would not be in the office.
* (3) It saided to me that you will not be in the office.
* (4) Was told to me that you would not be in office.
* (5) I’ve been said that you won’t be in office.
Translation

- Bio bih vam zahvalan kad biste završili izvještaj do sjutra.
- I would appreciate if you finished your report by tomorrow.

* (1) I would be appritiate when you finished until tomorrow.
* (2) I would be you faithfully if you done that to tomorrow.
* (3) I would be your faithfully when you finish your until tomorow.
Translation - survey

1. To what extent does translation of texts from English into Montenegro help you in learning English?

A. a lot
   14
B. partially
   11
C. little
   0
D. It does not help at all
   0
Translation - survey

2. Do you think that your understanding of the text would be at the same level if you did not translate it into Montenegrin?

   A. Yes          9
   B. No           16
Translation - survey

3. Does translation help you in learning English?

   A. Yes  23
   B. No   2
What else?

- Drill
- Use of mother tongue
- Don’t stick blindly to the textbook
- How can we make our students speak English in pairs and groups?
- Tell your students how to learn English
Conclusion

• There are no bad models, only their bad application

• Every model is good if it leads to communication

• Communication is our final goal