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THE POST-METHOD ERA

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ABSTRACT

The English language teaching is now in the Post Method Era in which previous attention to a variety of methods (Audiolingualism, Total Physical Response, Silent Way, Natural Approach, etc) has given way to a more generic approach to English Language Teaching methodology.Furthermore, Richard in Richard and Renandya (2002) argues that in contrast with the Method Era which was a primary concern of the language teaching profession to find more effective methods of language teaching and had most focused on study of particular methods, in the Post Method Era, the discussion on language teaching is not focusing on methodology anymore but concerning about principle.

Keywords: Post method era, Methodology, era, methods types, approaches.

INTRODUCTION

As we know, there have been many methods in language teaching intrduced by many linguists all over the world in their era. The adoption of approaches in language teaching is intended to solve the language teaching problems. “One result of this trend was the era of so-called designer or brand name approaches, that is package solutions that can be described and marketed for use everywhere in the world” (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:244).

METHODOLOGY

Specifically, Richards and Rodgers (2001:245) state that the examples of language teaching methods are Audiolingualism, Counselling-Learning, Situational Language Teaching, The Silent Way, Suggestopedia, and Total Physical Response. As teachers of English language, do we depend only on a certain method of teaching? Do we really apply certain method in the language teaching purely, without mixing it with any other methods in the same time? Certain approaches may work best on certain situations. So, every method seems to be good on certain conditions. It is no use debating on the choice of the best method of language teaching to apply. Such condition is in line with the statement that by early 1990s we didn’t need new

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method. What we needed was to get on with the business of unifying our method to language teaching and designing effective tasks and techniques that were informed by that method. This is what is recognizes as the post-method era (Brown, 2007:40). In addition, Richards and Rodgers (2001:247) states that methods as the key factor in accounting for success or failure in language teaching were not regarded anymore. Facing such condition, some tended to say about the death of methods and approaches and the term "post-method era" was sometimes used. Discussing about the post-method era, there may be many questions arise among us. However, there are at least three main issues and questions to answer thoroughly. They are: What is meant by the post-method era? ; Why did such era and condition happen to language teaching? ; How is the language teaching in the post-method era?

RESULTS

"A language teaching method is a single set of procedures which teachers are to follow in the classroom. Methods usually based on a set of beliefs about the nature of language and learning" (Nunan, 2003) in Thornbury (2009:1). At around the same time, Kumaravadivelu (1994) in Thornbury (2009:1) identified what he called the 'post method condition', a result of 'the widespread dissatisfaction with the conventional concept of method' . Rather than subscribe to single set of procedures, post-method teachers adapt their approach in accordance with a local, contextual factor, while at the same time being guided by a number of 'macro-strategies'. Two such macro-strategies are 'maximize learning opportunities' and 'promote learner autonomy.' Post-methodologist have used against methods to show how they inflate the influence of methods to better knock them down. The roots of post-methodology in the larger area of postmodernism, arguing that post-method, rather than being evidence of the maturation of teaching practices, is a further manifestation of the search for method and so is subject to the same criticisms. Post-method, despites its disparagement of innovations called methods, can be seen as an attempt to unify these disparate element in to a more holistic, redefined communicative language teaching (CLT) through a dialectical process of building and deconstructing forces. Brown (2007:40) states "By the early 1990s it was readily apparent that we didn't need a new method. We needed, instead, to get on with the business of unifying our approach to language teaching and designing effective tasks and techniques that were informed by that approach." So, in short, the post method era was the era when there was not a specific language teaching method used. The strategies used might be the mixed ones from several methods existed before.

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DISCUSSION

There are some factors that caused the existence of an era so called the post-method era. First, the arguments used to defeat method can also be seen as evidence that teachers, at least, were never really in the thrall of methods, Bell (2003). First, post-methodologists argue that the methods (prescription for practice) were really very limited in that they deal only with the first lessons of mainly lower level courses. Contrast these limited methods with CLT, which though never claiming universality, has arguably been the most widely applied of any method since grammar translation. Indeed the degree of application may be better guide to the so-called distinction between method and approach. If the method has limited realization, then one would expect little variation in its procedures, but if, like CLT, the method has such wide-scale application, variation in its realization would be normal. Second, post methodologists argue that the methods can never be realized in their purest form in the classroom according to the principles of their originator because methods are not derives from classroom practice. Richard & Rodgers (2001) calls the designer methods ideals types. This notion of the social construction of methods in million of different classroom suggest that what is called methods is often an a posteriori rationalization of many similar teaching practices rather than an a priori set of prescriptions emanating from one source. Third, a further dismissive argument against prescriptive methods is that little of interest remain in them, but the argument ignores the huge influence that the core philosophies of community language learning, silent way, and suggestopedia have had on language teaching. Indeed, the development of CLT has in part been driven by the co-option of the humanistic, student-centered principles of designer methods. The emergence of post methods pedagogy may have more to do with larger social forces than with pedagogical maturity. Fourth, according to Richard & Rodgers (2001:247) “some approaches and method are unlikely to be widely adopted because they are difficult to understand and used, lack clear practical application, require special training, and necessitated major changes in teacher’s practices and beliefs.” To sum up, the emergence of the post-method era is mainly the existence of certain methods in language teaching does not meet fully the need of language teaching itself. In the era of the post-method, the language teaching is done not only based on a certain method. The language teaching may adopt some different methods and techniques at the same time. Later on, there is a term of eclectic method. The findings of a survey on language teaching method done by Liu (2004:146) suggests that there is still a place for methods in language

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teaching in the post-method era. Another opinion was given by other language experts. Whatever we use to teach is not determined by a single factor, nor is it constrained by any individual teacher. It is always an adjustable decision that is shaped and reshaped through teaching and through the learning of teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2000) in Liu (2004:149). So, we can say that though there is still methods in the post-method era, but we do not rely on a certain method only.

CONCLUSION

By having discussion above, here we may come to some following conclusions. Firstly, the post-method era is not an era in which there is not any method used in language teaching. Secondly, the methods used in the language teaching may a combination of several methods which may be appropriate to the need of the language teaching itself. Thirdly, "Methods are not dead, nor will they ever be" (Bell, 2003:334). Shome (1998) as cited by Thalib (2002) in Bell (2003:334) argues with reference to the term post colonial, "the prefix 'post' … does not mean a final closure, nor does it announce the 'end' of that which it is appended; rather it suggests a thinking through and beyond the problematic of that which it is appended."

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