

The Fluency Way: A Functional Method for Oral Communication

Faramarz Samifanni¹

¹College of Teacher Education, Cebu Normal University, Cebu, Philippines

Correspondence: Faramarz Samifanni, Fukuoka International University of Health and Welfare, Japan. E-mail: fred sami@takagigakuen.ac.jp

Received: February 3, 2020

Accepted: February 28, 2020

Online Published: February 29, 2020

doi: 10.5539/elt.v13n3p100

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n3p100>

Abstract

This study delves into the analysis of theories of language acquisition and teaching methods. A qualitative approach was used to analyze three language acquisition theories and five teaching methods to help and provide teachers with methods that are relevant and applicable in developing and enhancing the speaking skills of the students. Findings revealed that grammatical skill is not the focus of Second Language Acquisition. It is concluded that language learning and acquisition are dynamic activities requiring social, cultural, and cognitive competencies on the part of the teacher. The teaching of language is most effective and productive when the learners are actively engaged in authentic tasks that are conducted in a natural and spontaneous manner to enable learners to gain a total psycho-socio-cultural-linguistic experience. Learner-centeredness is a universal theme and the teacher-learner relationship is a cooperative and collaborative partnership for relevant and functional language competence. Suggestions and recommendations for future studies were proposed.

Keywords: communication, complexes, language learning, learner-centered, oral proficiency

1. Introduction

Communication is essential to human beings; to realize this, a medium is required: language. People express and exchange meanings through language because, without it, life would be difficult to imagine. As the world shrinks and cultures mix or from an economic standpoint - as the world becomes flat, one inevitable consequence is the need for a common language. It has become a practical demand to be competent in the world's number one lingua franca: The English language along with other major languages.

Examining the philosophy of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories makes us have a deeper understanding of human thoughts and reality. It affects logic, ethics, and history as a result of language application. The central question towards SLA theories is whether or not people think in a language, or do they think and then translate those thoughts into language?

1.1 On Second Language Learning

Learning another language is not confined to talking and exchanging ideas with native speakers. It enables individuals to familiarize language at a cultural level which can contribute to the holistic attainment of one's life goals. Therefore, studying a second or new language is reasonably an attainable and delightful avenue in learning a new culture through communication with its natives.

Central to the global need of a common language (the English language in particular), is the role of parents and teachers to effectively facilitate language development and language acquisition. The global demand on "English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL)" teachers have become higher; the service industry has an evident portion of (ESL) teachers to foreigners both domestic and abroad. However, meeting the global demand is more challenging for visible minority teachers; because they do not fulfill the typical stereotype of a native speaker as blond hair and blue eyes Anglo-Saxon race. These teachers need to be equipped with competent teaching skills and effective teaching methods.

1.2 The Value of Vocabulary

Knowing the words of a language is important to express oneself. There is the supposition that grammatical knowledge weighs more than vocabulary. Thus, Folse (2004) claimed that traditional training on the second language gave focus on grammatical structure.

One of the big questions in SLA is "How do students learn a second language?" If one knows the mystery of

learning another language, only then can an effective pedagogy be initially formulated.

Often, the consciousness of one word is enough; as Keith Folse (2004) experienced in Japan. Knowing the sentence pattern: “Sumimasen, ____ -wa doko desuka? Excuse me, where is the ____?” he surely went to the store to buy flour. However, he does not know the Japanese term for flour. He wandered and failed to find a bag of flour. He saw one of his students and asked, the Japanese word for “flour;” the student misheard it as “flower” and responded “hana” rather than “komugiko.” He was offered chrysanthemums, so he decided to leave the supermarket failing to buy flour. Folse (2004) reflected that in that situation, what he needed was the word “komugiko.” He then learned that lexis is essentially “more significant than grammar.”

1.3 Communicative vs. Grammar Teaching

ESL/EFL lessons yield speakers’ fluency, some of them are seen to have problems with grammar accuracy. The overemphasis on oral communication faculties and forcing learners to use English with lacking consideration to accuracy are considered central reasons for the issues mentioned.

Presently, the challenge is whether students can properly communicate in the target language (TL). In countries like Japan, language instruction is deficient in English communication. Language instruction is focused on passing standardized tests and not on actual communication. As a result, students know and master the usage of the target language, but they fail to speak and use it (Imai, 1998). Problem areas mentioned in the studies of Folse, Takeshima and Imai help gain insights on what should be the focus of SLA.

Grammar studies aim to improve communication with teaching that emphasizes form commented (Doughty & Williams, 1998). On the other hand, Swain (1998) stressed that “out of context” grammar instruction, as models for learning and memorization is likewise inadequate. However, learners may gain grammatical skills with consideration to context (Beretta, 1989). Therefore, English instruction is on the right path but teachers’ roles should be taken into account.

1.4 Language Fluency and Accuracy

The term fluency is vague and depends on the speaker and the context. Its usage in everyday conversation may not be the same as how ESL teachers use it in the Philippines. However, most second-language instructors agree on the same meaning that fluency is smoothness and ease of speech among the learners and speakers. Accuracy, on the other hand, does not include smoothness and ease of speech (Jong, Steinel, Florijn, & Schoonen, 2012).

Fluent speakers of English can communicate with confidence and they eventually learn proper expressions. Fluency among students depends upon sophisticated “word recognition abilities,” but this does not ensure fluency because it is frequently ignored in class. The negligence of fluency has started to diminish as studies and philosophies have re-conceptualized and practical investigations have scrutinized the effectiveness of methods in achieving fluency (Swain, 1998).

Fluency and accuracy are prime topics of language learning and acquisition. This research attempts to gain ground on how fluency and accuracy should be treated in SLA.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach of Creswell (2002) which examined deeply into the Second Language Acquisition theories and approaches and language teaching methods that thrived in language classrooms.

Specifically, it compared selected theories and approaches to Second Language Acquisition and language teaching methods.

The data for this research were collected after careful mining of available SLA theories and theoretical approaches. The researcher considered the popularity of Stephen Krashen’s SLA theory, Larsen-Freeman’s Complexity theory, and Atkinson’s Socio-cognitive theory and identified its philosophy and characteristics. Then, five teaching methods were purposely selected namely; Community Language Learning (CLL), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Direct Method (DM), Language Experience Approach (LEA), and Suggestopedia due to its relevance, importance, and current use.

The analysis involved gathering the results from numerous qualitative investigations of a similar topic to help conclude for comparative purposes. Based on the themes, the researcher formulated a lesson guide to encourage language fluency. Figure 1 shows the schematic presentation of the research process.

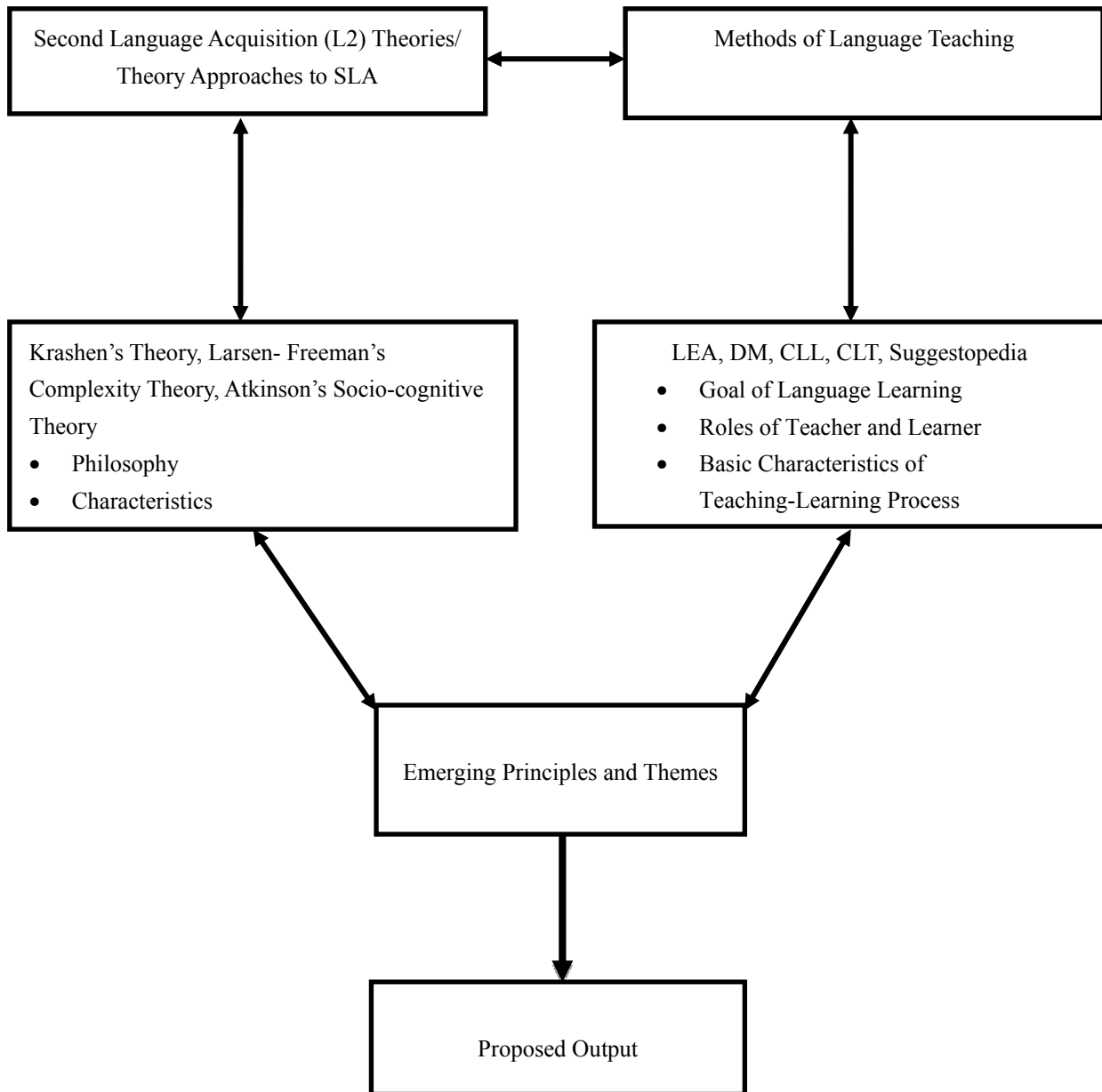


Figure 1. Schematic presentation of the research process

Most theories have corresponding methods with them or vice versa. Figure 1 revealed the equal standing of language acquisition theories and language teaching methods. The comparison of language theories and teaching methods lead to identifying the emerging principles and themes and synthesizing them. Then, a model for oral fluency served as the output after the evaluation of emerging principles.

3. Results

After syntheses on SLA theories and methods, the following are the 10 themes recognized:

Theme 1. Language learning in language use is unconscious. This is a chief feature for any language teaching method dealing with the precise relationship between education and achievement. Also, purposive language learning heightens the learners' enthusiasm.

Theme 2. Learners connect through language. They use language in understanding messages directed to them and in relaying their thoughts and emotions. Language study is not limited to understanding its grammar and vocabulary, but in establishing relationships.

Theme 3. Learning or acquiring a language is spontaneous. Humans have the innate capacity and the need to

communicate or relate with each other. Therefore, humans need to have a tool for understanding and making the message clear for both the giver and the receiver.

Theme 4. Language teachers need to acquire important skills. Teachers have to attain socio-cultural background and native-like fluency of the target language to meet standards.

Theme 5. Teaching is learner-centered. The different methods imply the centeredness towards the learners. It is the learners who benefit all the preparation and activities in the teaching-learning process.

Theme 6. Meaningful learning is achieved through the provision of a conducive learning environment, the use of authentic tasks and materials. These will help in improving the learners’ motivation and interest to be competent in their “target language.”

Theme 7. A learner’s mother language affects second language acquisition. The absence of particular sounds in the mother tongue can give the learner a challenging time in second language production.

Theme 8. Learners' economic standing affects SLA. The learners' economic environment affects their vocabulary choice. Furthermore, less fortunate learners may find SLA more challenging compared to well-off learners.

Theme 9. Individual differences affect SLA. The individuality of the learners: slow or fast, hyper or overly calm, interested or disinterested; in learning another language, has an impact on how they absorb, process, and apply the information.

Theme 10. The instructor plays a vital part in effective linguistic instruction. Teachers must be equipped with socio-cultural and intellectual competence. Using engaging teaching strategies and relevant instructional materials enable students' active participation. These need to be observed when facilitating linguistic instruction regardless of the learners' age and levels.

4. Discussion

Second Language Acquisition Theories and hypotheses comprise the arguments on how students learn a second language. Each SLA theory can be assumed to clarify one part of the language learning process. However, scholars have not extensively acknowledged any major SLA theory. Therefore, the theories of Krashen, Larsen-Freeman, and Atkinson needs to be analyzed and synthesized in the context of their philosophical differences and similarities.

4.1 Similarities and Differences among the Theories of Language Acquisition: Philosophy

Table 1. Analysis of SLA Theories and Theory Approaches to SLA as to Philosophy

<i>Theory and its Philosophy</i>	<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>
<p>Krashen’s SLA Theory</p> <p>SLA needs to be more like the child's acquisition of its native language</p> <p>Gradual ability to use language is the result of many subconscious processes.</p>	<p>The three theories identify SLA as a complex process and a system.</p>	<p>Complexity and Socio-cognitive</p>
<p>Larsen-Freeman’s Complexity Theory</p> <p>SLA is psycho-linguistic</p> <p>Language is seen as complex adaptive system</p> <p>Cognition per se is fiction.</p>	<p>They recognize that SLA is cognitive but is interrelated with other areas.</p>	<p>Theory Approaches to SLA make no reference on a child’s first language acquisition</p>
<p>Atkinson’s Socio-cognitive Theory Approach to SLA</p> <p>SLA is a natural, adaptive process of ecological alignment.</p> <p>What is adapted is included in that process.</p>	<p>They acknowledge that the environment affects SLA.</p>	

As reflected in Table 1, Stephen Krashen's philosophy viewed human beings' innate characteristics to acquire language(s) through a language learning process. He concluded that young learners can easily master their first language through the listening of meaningful words. Krashen (1982) concluded further that second and subsequent language(s) can be acquired in the same manner. Moreover, Krashen (1982) claimed that "a second language learner improves and progresses along with the natural order when he or she receives second language input that is one step beyond his or her current stage of linguistic competence."

Complexity Theory Approach to SLA by Diane Larsen-Freeman (2011) claimed that second language acquisition is psycholinguistic rather than purely linguistic in nature. The theory is anchored on James Gleick's (1987) chaos/complexity theory, stated language as a complex adaptive system. The theory perceived language as an active group of outlines which evolved from practice (Atkinson, 2011).

The terminology "soft assembly" implied how students utilized their linguistic reservoir as they deliberately responded to the communicative challenges presented to them. In soft assembly, fundamentals gathered may vary any time throughout the activity from one activity to another. Meanwhile, "co-adaptation" is an interactive activity where students repeatedly visited identical areas (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008).

Socio-cognitive Theory Approach to SLA showed a viewpoint that highlighted practical unions among all kinds of "interactants" within a multifaceted environment. SLA is considered as an accommodation course where the atmosphere is involved and understood to both parties. SLA yielded an ecological view and cognition is an essential part of the entire mental-physical-mundane setting where humans are viewed both as ecological and adaptive organisms. Humans depended on their environment for survival through incessant and vigorous environmental adjustments with their perception (Atkinson, 2011).

4.2 Characteristics

The nature and characteristics of SLA theory and theory approaches are anchored on their implications on language definition, cognition, and language learning illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Analysis of SLA Theories and Theory Approaches to SLA as to Nature or Characteristic

<i>Theories' Nature/Characteristic</i>		<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>
Krashen's SLA Theory	Learning and acquisition are distinct and comprehensible input is necessary in language acquisition.		The focus of Krashen's theory is comprehensible input.
	Learner output and grammar focus have no direct influence on acquisition. Learning is the result of working on real problems.	Grammar is not the focus of SLA.	
Larsen-Freeman's Complexity Theory Approach to SLA	SLA is a dynamic phenomenon. Language is adapted to its contexts of use.	Teaching is most effective when students engage in authentic tasks of natural communication	The focus of Complexity theory is the context.
	Language learning takes place through processes of co-adaptation and soft-assembly.	Complexity and Socio-cognitive Theory Approaches to SLA make no distinction between acquisition and learning.	
Atkinson's Socio-cognitive Theory Approach to SLA	SLA is a species of social action. Language is a tool for social action. Learning is a default state of human affairs.		The focus of Socio-cognitive Theory is the way the mind, body, and world work together.
	Language acquisition involves publicly observable activities rather than being locked away in non-visible cognitive space.		

Krashen's SLA Theory placed a distinction between acquisition and learning. For Krashen, learning is the outcome of cracking real-life difficulties while language acquisition required comprehensible input as its sufficient condition. Additionally, language acquisition identical in all languages claimed that people possess an inborn capacity guiding the process of language learning. Babies learn their native dialect just by attentively heeding to meaningful spoken language; the same goes with foreign languages. There are two-fold independent systems present in the performance of another language: the "acquired system or acquisition" accountable for sentence fluency and the "learned system or learning" in-charge of sentence modification. Krashen posted that language acquisition is of higher value than learning. Most importantly, language acquisition requires comprehensible input as its sufficient condition (Krashen, 1982).

Meanwhile, Complexity Theory Approach saw SLA as a dynamic phenomenon that asserted that knowledge must be contextual. Language is situation-based which invoked mutual connection. Atkinson (2011) pointed out that the prevalence of outlines from individuals who interacted is both due to the historical background and the current socio-cultural standards. Complexity is fundamentally about change and that language is continuously evolving while remaining suitably forceful to retain identity. There is no built-in syllabus and inter-language systems emerged from usage. Students' linguistic reservoirs are assumed to advance from their prior connections which occur through co-adjustment courses (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Students utilized these reservoirs to deliberately answer the teachers (Thelen & Smith, 1994). Language learning is not only putting information into a fixed structure but about altering the structure. The students' linguistic reservoirs are constant groups of active, increasing, abreast with the period, location, and situation (Larsen-Freeman, 2011).

The socio-cognitive Theory Approach perceived SLA as a species of social action. It required learners to perform an energetic part in linguistic progress giving importance to frequency rather than sufficiency. It also stated that variability is the persistent, cross-linguistic impact manifested in many ways where intentionality and means of acting are important. Furthermore, the theory perceived education as an automatic condition of people's activities. For this theory approach, cognition is extended and distributed. People are essentially organized as socio-cognitive elements composed of an unceasing, disclosed, and vigorous structure adjusted to temporal circumstances. Finally, it considers language as a tool for social action (Atkinson, 2011).

4.3 Analysis of Methods of Language Teaching

The following shows the comparison of the language teaching methods according to goals of learning, teacher and learner roles, and basic characteristics of the teaching-learning process shown in the Table 3.

Ju (2013) proposed some principles of language learning: The Communication principle which has two sub-principles; "task principle and meaningfulness principle." Task principle accounted for activities that involved actual information exchange encouraged knowledge while meaningfulness principle involved tasks where the language is employed to accomplish meaningful responsibilities encouraged knowledge. The expected result of second language learning is successful communication (Knight, 2001).

Students achieving proficiency in the subject and advancing their reading abilities is the goal of the Language Experience Approach (LEA). It establishes a student's verbal abilities and acquaintances as the groundwork for reading and writing. The chief principle of LEA is utilizing learners' self-vocabulary, linguistic outlines, and upbringing in making reading materials, enabling a sensible and pleasurable experience.

Han-Kwang (Chen, 2011) noted that the Direct Method (DM) is anchored on intellectual practice and offers pliancy and versatility for learners. It integrates target language usage without an option to the learner's native language. In this method, the concept is conveyed by illustration and the use of visual aids. Direct Method, claimed by Chern (2002), drills learners to employ syntactic English sentence patterns naturally. Students may conquer the mother language and be accustomed to English as Kruidenier (2002) suggested. Direct Method as Huang (2005) posted, strongly disapproved of strict grammar instruction and supported bilingual instruction because of comprehensive rule mastery and translation skills.

Community Language Learning (CLL) imposed the target language communicatively and learners are encouraged to learn about their learning and take responsibility. In the implementation of the CLL approach, Ariza (2002) cascaded; students can overcome their worries of committing an error, attaining better morale, and connecting in a friendly atmosphere hence encouraging language achievement. As a consequence, social and psycholinguistic overwhelmed students overcome these barriers to learning a new language. CLL builds a sense of unity in motivating learners to collectively, naturally, spontaneously, and fearlessly study the target language (Rardin, Tranel, Tirone, & Green, 1988).

4.3.1 Goals of Learning

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is directed on the proper use of the target language in a specified context (Ju, 2013). It highlights students' linguistic expertise instead of structural and grammatical competence (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). It concentrates on smooth interactions, sometimes compromising accuracy. During interactions, mistakes are acceptable provided that they convey the intended message. Furthermore, students become more motivated to learn with a clear and active drive (Ju, 2013).

Suggestopedia aimed to accelerate the learning process and for Magiru, Ance and Lonel (2012), it is used to quickly advance a student's conversational competence. Learning happens in a music-encouraged class; putting the learners in a tranquil state while propositions are presented. Learners are mandated to memorize extraordinary terminologies to help to understand discussions. The method requires creativity, inquiries, responses, performances, and listening drills under intensive tranquility. Suggestopedia is supposed to be a jumping-off point to stimulate the students' curiosity and desire to read more and to go deeply into the topic by analyzing the literary language structure.

4.3.2 Teacher and Learner Roles

For Direct Method (DM), teachers and learners are partners revealed Heller (2005) wherein instructors communicate events as a manager to evade mishaps in class. The target language is exclusively utilized in activities throughout the lessons. Learners focus on conversations and on achieving fluency with English through student participation (Palfreyman, 2006). The teacher aims to achieve all the advantages of every procedure they know. Having this mental enlightenment, second language learners become more efficient in discovering, formulating, discerning, and observing their mental processes (Huang C., 2004).

In Community Language Learning (CLL), the teacher acts as a counselor and learners are the clients. Charles Curran's CLL concentrates on apprehension minimizing strategies. CLL implements strategies in probing mechanisms to link with learners, encourages effective teaching, and minimizes language learning complexes. Distinctively, this method decrees that the instructor is the "counselor" supporting the learner's well-being. As "counselor," the instructor shows consideration to the students' apprehension towards the threat in language learning and displays compassion (Samimy & Rardin, 1994). The following are some distinctive tasks involved in CLL: little conversation circles, transcription of the student-generated text, meta-card games, minor group tasks, and reflections after listening sessions. The variety of methods in CLL caters varied language learning styles and appease very anxious students.

As for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the instructors act as facilitators while the learners act as communicators allowing the students to have more freedom to take responsibility for their knowledge (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The instructor provides the exercise, instructs the students, then steps back and observes; occasionally being an overseer. CLT emphasizes and requires the all-out performance of students and the least presence of the teacher. Meanwhile, Breen and Candlin (1980), illustrated student roles being "negotiator-between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning-emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities at hand. The learner should contribute as much as he/she gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way" (p.110). Nevertheless, "The instructor serves as a facilitator, a coordinator and information source, guide, researcher, and learner" (p.99). The student-centered lessons are proven extremely helpful in adult language instruction. CLT offered teachers a chance to rethink and take-off the dress of "God" and become more learner-friendly (Ju, 2013).

Suggestopedia portrays the teacher as an authority and the learners as followers. Its success lies in opening the right hemisphere of the brain to learning, while the comfortable environment aids in overcoming inhibitions and barriers to learning. It essentially sustains a relaxed state amongst the learners and also lets the resources to be effective. The instructors should generate conditions where the learners are very comfortable, and provide resources to support constructive reaction and memory (Magiru & Magiru, 2012).

In the case of the Language Experience Approach (LEA), the teacher is the model and the learners are the followers. Instructors modify and apply the model appropriately to assist the linguistic skills development of learners. The sections of the text are spoken and the students must understand. However, the inadequate students' language faculty may hinder understanding the material at hand.

Table 3. Analysis of Language Teaching Methods

<i>Language Teaching Methods</i>	<i>Goal of Language Learning</i>	<i>Roles of Teacher and Learner</i>	<i>Teaching-Learning Process</i>
<p>Direct method (DM) By Charles Berlitz</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate more use of the target language 	<p>Teacher and learners are partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother tongue is never used • Use of realia, pictures or pantomimes • No translation is allowed
<p>Community Language Learning (CLL) By Charles Curan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the language communicatively • Learn about their own learning and take responsibility 	<p>Teacher = counselor Learner = clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach is patterned upon counseling technique • Learners are considered as “whole persons” • Students converse in their native language • Target language translation in chunks aid student to express in the target language
<p>Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) By David Nunan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the language appropriately in a given social context 	<p>Teacher = facilitator Learners = communicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of authentic materials • Activities are carried out in small groups • Learners have choice on what to say and how to say it
<p>Suggestopedia By Georgi Lozanov</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate learning process 	<p>Teacher = authority Learners = followers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are comfortable and confident in the surrounding • Various techniques include music and art • Students select target language names and choose new occupations
<p>Language Experience Approach (LEA) By Roach Van Allen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master content area material and improve reading skills 	<p>Teacher = facilitator Learners = followers and interactors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use own vocabulary, language patterns, and experiences to create texts • Teachers tailor instruction to the specific interests and needs of individual students.

4.3.3 Teaching-Learning Process

Curran (1976) proposed “five learning stages” which learners undergo in language mastery. Stage one begins when a learner is relying on the instructor. The second stage happens as the learner starts to utilize the target language with regular aide from the instructor who “counsels” and offers help, consideration, and a calm atmosphere. The third stage includes the innovative learner being self-sufficient in the language. The fourth stage is marked by “role reversal,” where the learner is proficient and the instructor tries to understand. Finally, at the fifth stage, the learner has completed meta-linguistic competence and is capable of independent learning independent.

Direct Method (DM) shared by Merton (2001), prohibits the use of learners’ native tongue and translation. It uses realia along with pictures or pantomimes. Verbal abilities are formed in a systematic movement through the Socratic method in mini and rigorous classes. Terminologies and sentences are daily imparted; the syntax is inductively explained. Novel instruction ideas are imparted through display and repetition: tangible vocabulary or idea association. Also, speaking and listening are imparted along with the stress on precise articulation and syntax (Lindsay & Gawn, 2005).

Community Language Learning (CLL) is patterned upon the counseling technique. The learners are considered as “whole persons,” the students converse in their native language, and target language translation in chunks aid student to express in the target language (Ariza, 2002). The learner-made dialog provides students the freedom to express in their mother language. The instructor says their statements to the target language and the learners reiterate. Anybody immersed to “shock language” (exposed to a foreign language condition) appreciates the strategies employed in CLL. Discussion in small groups within a non-aggressive environment promotes the learning consciousness within a secure community. As a result, students feel secure: mutual trust grows and learning is personalized as students participate in the adventurous course of communication. CLL reduces students’ fear of performing due to the anxiety of making mistakes (Rardin et al., 1988).

CLT requires the utilization of “authentic materials,” small group activities, and allows learners’ preference of communication modality. The students are more involved in speaking and regularly participate in active unrestrained activities while moving around to accomplish a mission. Provided an increased responsibility to participate, learners develop self-confidence with the target language and are more accountable for their learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The learner-centered class emphasizes the communicative process and fluency to communicate meaning (Ma, 2009).

Suggestopedia helps students to be comfortable and be confident based on their surroundings. Its various techniques include music and art where students could choose names and novel professions using the target language. Accordingly, Suggestopedia utilizes “humanistic approaches” where learning happens with “suggestion” as learners are in an extremely calm state influenced by melody. This type of activity understands initiatives, listening exercises, role-play, questions and answers. The materials should consist of still images/photos/postcards, music and texts with literary quality and interesting characters. Suggestopedia, from the psychological point of view, is said to fit perfectly to students who are good language learners, like socializing, enjoy diversity and revolution, and love playing games besides working in groups. Students who like reading, role-playing, and theatre are deeply reactive to judgment needing distinct criticism and prefer talking to scribing, who are attentive in expressing passions and private subjects (Magiru & Magiru, 2012).

The fundamental concept of the Language Experience Approach (LEA), revealed by Nessel and Dixon (2008), is to utilize the learners’ word bank, linguistic outlines, and acquaintances in formulating passages to enable a pleasing reading experience. An “experience” may involve activities a learner has joined claimed Taylor (1993) such as excursions, firsthand tasks, videos, new-cultural experiences, simulations, competitions, or story-telling. Learners are directed with an elaboration of “an experience” followed by transcribing the conversation. Learners witness the formation of an article instead of inaccessible decrypting abilities. Learners start sensing the capacity to read and to write is attainable like normal speaking. Self-generated texts allow students to learn and recognize printed verbal terms. Through experiences recall, learners can discover word phonology, spelling, and concept. The non-competitiveness of the LEA promotes a constructive effect on the learner’s confidence. The flexibility of LEA allows customized instruction (Huang J., 2013).

4.4 Functional Method in Teaching Oral English Proficiency

The teacher in this method has to be aware of the cultural aspect of Second Language Acquisition. To use the method (see Appendix A), the teacher needs to have cultural competence which is the awareness of the difference between high context and low context culture. Many teachers seem not trained on the importance of the socio-cultural aspect of second language teaching and acquisition, and here is where fluency can have a high

effect on accuracy; whereas accuracy will not lead to fluency. The inadequate and disorderly grammar studies could lead to wrong terminologies, causing additional problems regarding language learning: “fluency and accuracy.” Where fluency is the basic necessity for communication, accuracy is the core of academia. Most SLA teachers seem to bypass fluency and jump into teaching accuracy without the due process of preparing the students for SLA. It is like asking a toddler to read without even practicing the sound of the language and teaching him or her to recognize the alphabet.

5. Conclusion

This study was conceptualized from the realization that language teachers need certain awareness in specific areas to have a productive second/foreign language classroom. More often than not, students are forced to memorize long dialogues as opposed to giving them something that they can relate to, know, and learn from. Three theories of language acquisition had been analyzed in the areas of philosophy and characteristics. Also, five methods of language teaching according to goals of learning, roles of teacher and learner, and basic characteristics of the teaching-learning process had been examined. Then a synthesis on the emerging themes in both theories and methods of language teaching and learning was made. Finally, a functional method of teaching oral English proficiency was developed. The results revealed that language acquisition and language learning are dynamic activities that require social, cultural and cognitive competencies on the part of the teacher. The teaching of language is most effective and productive when the learners are actively engaged in authentic tasks. These tasks are conducted naturally and spontaneously so that learners will have a total psycho-socio-cultural-linguistic experience.

Regardless of language learning or acquisition theory and teaching method, learner-centeredness is a universal theme. The teacher-learner relationship is a cooperative and collaborative partnership for relevant and functional language competence.

Also, language teachers need cultural knowledge, specifically in the field of the low and high context aspect of culture, and academic awareness to be effective SLA instructors. SLA teachers should educate themselves more and ensure that they are culturally and psychologically prepared to motivate their students to learn. Moreover, there is a call for a revision and improvement of SLA teaching methods and the relation of teacher-student role in the classroom to enhance the SLA students’ motivation and self-confidence. L2 teachers should have more knowledge and awareness of psycho-socio-cultural aspects of language learning and how oral communication teaching is different from teaching other aspects of language skills such as reading, writing, and grammar. While a functional lesson guide in teaching oral proficiency has been introduced, there is room for further improvement and research. It is also recommended to utilize this guide to add to the vast interests in teaching how to communicate using the English language as a tool.

Acknowledgment

My deepest gratitude to the Almighty: The Creator of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds; and the friendly and cheerful people of Philippines who made my life more meaningful and educational. Finally, great thanks to the founders of Fukuoka International University of Health and Welfare, Japanese friendly colleagues, supportive friends and especially to the students who all welcomed my existence in the beautiful Land of the Rising Sun.

Conflicts of interest/Competing interests

(Not Applicable)

Funding

This research was not funded by any organization.

References

- Ariza, E. N. (2002). Resurrecting old language learning methods to reduce anxiety for new language learners: Community language learning to the rescue. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 26(3), 717-728. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2002.10162586>
- Atkinson, D. (2011). *Alternative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition*. Abingdon, OX: Routledge.
- Beretta, A. (1989). Attention to form or meaning? Error treatment in the Bangalore Project. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23(2), 283-303. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587337>
- Breen, M. & Candlin, C. (1980). The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 89-112. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/1.2.89>

- Chen, H. K. (2011). Analysis of English Cognitive Direct Method from the Perspective of Knowledge Management. *The Journal of Human Resource and Adult Learning*, 7(2), 71-78. Retrieved from <http://www.hraljournal.com/Page/8%20Han-Kwang%20Chen.pdf>
- Chern, C. (2002). English Language Teaching in Taiwan Today. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 22(2), 97-105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0218879020220209>
- Creswell, J. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Curran, C. (1976). *Counseling-learning in second languages*. Apple River, IL: Apple River.
- Doughty, C. & Williams, J. (1998). *Pedagogical Choices in Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Folse, K. (2004). *Vocabulary Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Gleick, J. (1987). *Chaos Making a New Science*. Vikings Book.
- Heller, M. (2005). *Linguistic Minorities and Modernity: A Sociolinguistic Ethnography*, London: Longman.
- Huang, C. (2005). Designing high-quality interactive multimedia learning modules. *Computer medical imaging and graphics*, 29, 223-233. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compmedimag.2004.09.017>
- Huang, J. (2013). Bridging Authentic Experiences and Literacy Skills through the Language Experience Approach. *Journal of Adult Education*, 42(1), 8-15. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1047378.pdf>
- Imai, K. (1998). *Review of English Grammar from Communicative Viewpoints*. *English Education* (March), 8-10.
- Jong, N. d., Steinel, M., Florijn, A. & Schoonen, R. (2012). Linguistic skills and speaking fluency in a second language. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 34(5), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716412000069>
- Ju, F. (2013). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): A Critical and Comparative Perspective. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(9), 1579-1583. <https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.9.1579-1583>
- Knight, P. (2001). *The development of EFL methodology*. In C. C. Mercer, *English language teaching in its social context* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. CA: University of Southern California. Retrieved from http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles_and_practice.pdf
- Kruidenier, J. (2002). *Literacy Assessment in Adult Basic Education* (Vol. 3). London: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://ncsall.net/index.html?id=574.html>
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1986). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2011). *A Complexity Approach to Second Language Development / Acquisition*. In D. A. (ed, *Alternative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 48-72). Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. & Cameron, L. (2008). *Complex systems and applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lindsay, A. & Gawn, J. (2005). *Developing literacy: supporting achievement*. Leicester: NIACE.
- Ma, Q. (2009). Key Elements in Conducting Communicative Approach to Language Teaching. *Canadian Social Science*, 5(2), 46-55. <http://doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720090502.007>
- Magiru, A. & Magiru, L. (2012). Suggestopedia, A Serious Competitive Game. *eLearning & Software for Education*, 339-344. Retrieved from <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=203563>
- Merton, B. (2001). Encouraging interest. *Adults learning*, 12(5), 7-10.
- Nessel, D. & Dixon, C. (2008). *Language Experience Approach (LEA)*. California: Corwin Press A SAGE Company.
- Palfreyman, D. (2006). Social context and resources for language learning. *System*, 34(3), 352-370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2006.05.001>
- Rardin, J., Tranel, D. D., Tirone, P. & Green, B. D. (1988). *Education in a New Dimension*. East Dubuque, IL:

Counseling-Learning Publications.

- Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language Teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Samimy, K. & Rardin, J. (1994). Adult Language Learners' Affective Reactions to Community Language Learning: A Descriptive Study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 27(3), 379-390. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1994.tb01215.x>
- Swain, M. (1998). *Focus on Form through Conscious Reflection; Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Takashima, H. (2000). Instruction for Practical Communication Abilities. *English Education (January)*, 12-15.
- Taylor, M. (1993). *The Language Experience*. In J. C. (Eds.), *Approaches to adult ESL literary instruction* (pp. 46-58). Washington, DC: The Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Thelen, E. & Smith, L. B. (1994). *A dynamic systems approach to the development of cognition and action*. MA: The MIT Press.

Appendix A

Proposed Lesson Guide for Oral English Proficiency

Introduction

Language learning and acquisition start with fluency. The researcher suggests that Second Language (L2) instructors assist learners achieve fluency through applying the proposed lesson guide; help the students develop their confidence in speaking the target language.

The students have to imitate and use everyday life situations in forms of visual aided dialogues. By role-playing, they get to fully practice expressions and short sentences. With every new word and expression, they learn and try to use the words in actual conversation practice, they will gain more confidence.

For most learners, the most effective way to learn and develop L2 is to enjoy what they are learning. Training programs using content-based instruction is the latest technique in learning a language. Language classes should be equipped with well-trained and experienced teachers. Therefore, teachers' knowledge and skills are important for L2 learners.

This guide provides sample activities as a prototype lesson guide for oral English proficiency. The lesson guide can be utilized best in both the Direct Method and the Communicative Language Teaching Method. This proposed lesson guide will be suited for freshmen tertiary L2 students as a formal content in the curriculum of first-year English classes, or as an enrichment lesson in any English language course. Activities in the Fluency Way can enrich the aforementioned methods in English language teaching.

Lesson Guide

Target Learners: Freshmen tertiary L2 students (30-60 students per class)

Class Duration: 50 – 90 minutes

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, the learners are expected to:

1. gain confidence in speaking a second language;
2. communicate effectively even with limited vocabulary;
3. practice using the English language through dialogues, role-plays and other interactive activities.

Materials:

1. English language Textbook/ Modules
2. Meta-cards (vowels/ consonants)
3. Sample dialogues
4. Chalk / board marker / blackboard / whiteboard
5. Matters of the alphabet

Procedure:

I. Self-Introduction of Students – Activity 1 (duration varies on the number of students)

Students randomly introduce themselves as chosen by the teacher using the format below. The teacher introduces oneself first.

Format:

My name is _____.

I live in _____ (village/town/city) _____ (province).

I like cooking, jogging, _____, _____, _____.

I don't like natto, durian, _____, _____, _____.

NB: For self-introduction, shy students have no choice.

There is no pattern as to who starts first or who is next. The teacher decides randomly and in so doing, excites the class as to who will be next and alerts all.

This activity allows the teacher to observe and evaluate students' personality, behavior, and language skill, and while the students participate the teacher takes note of each student and tries to evaluate.

Teacher should know about identifying learners' characters.

The teacher identifies who has a "leader" character, chooses, and appoints them later.

II. Choose a Group Leader – Activity 2 (5 minutes)

As the teacher already pre-identified leaders during the self-introduction activity, the teacher appoints them systematically.

The teacher creates a tense atmosphere by asking "Who wants to be a leader?" to break the ice appropriately by empowering them and says that they are their teachers.

III. Choose Group Members – Activity 3 (5 minutes)

At this stage, students are already empowered and groups with 4-5 members are informed that leaders are their teachers and if the leader fails, the group also fails.

NB: No pairs or friends should be together

Males and Females classes are treated differently unless the class is coed with males treated more forceful and females gentler.

Teacher has to place forceful words to consolidate power and respect.

IV. First Lesson - Sounds of English (The Alphabet) Activity 4 (10-15 minutes)

This lesson is done only for the new class of the teacher.

This evaluates the L2 learners' grasp of the basic sounds (vowels and consonants)

Teacher must be certain of the sounds. Emphasis should be on the letters A, F, M, N, R, T, S, and emphasis on the pronunciation rule of the:

Th = T Thank you.

Th = D This is a book. Give me a pen.

Th does not = S Sank you.

Through the emphasis of the basic letters and sounds, students can rationalize and deprogram the wrong sounds they have learned until that time. This prepares learners for fluency.

Always ask questions to the students.

V. Lesson Proper (Curriculum-based)

The instructor initiates the lesson by pointing to the lesson and reading the dialogue.

She/he emphasizes particular sounds which are more challenging to pronounce and teachers may even write them on the board for visual contact.

The students collectively repeat after the teacher.

VI. Students get in their Group - Activity 5

Lessons are situational dialogues.

Emphasis is done on everyday situations and communication.

Greeting Situation: Starts with Aggressive Self-Introduction, e.g. I don't think we've met. My name is _____.

Groups are given different situations but similar dialogues.

Each group performs in front of the class. While performing, they are evaluated by other group leaders and cheered.

Treatment of Errors:

It's only for pronunciation after all the groups have performed that the instructor might reemphasize on certain words or expressions.

No group/individual is singled out for mistakes. No group/individual criticisms

Students are given exercises from the book to do in class.

NB: As time passes, and practices extend to competition, students become more independently responsible, competitive and confident in accumulating a higher level of communication in Second Language Acquisition.

Through group-work and individual performances, students enjoy as well as gain confidence.

The instructor would be given more respect as a guide like that of an older sister/brother.

VI. Positive Reinforcement

- Appreciate students' effort
- Give encouraging speeches

VII. Evaluation is based on the text's level check test which is given at the beginning of the class after the group formation and the final exam would be that of the same test given without informing the students that the same test is being administered. This would show the teacher how far the student has progressed during the term or the year.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).