

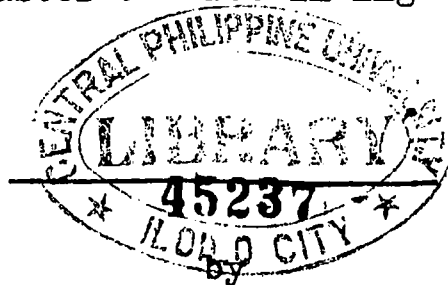
AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS  
OF TWO METHODS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

---

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the School of Graduate Studies  
Central Philippine University

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in English



Laura Rodriguez-Montaña

October 1975

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Man has shown his superiority over animals by means of his sophisticated way of communication through the use of language.

Although man may boast of his many inventions, nothing can surpass, or even just equal, language. Through language man is able to communicate his thoughts, feelings, needs and dreams. He can talk about the past and the future. He is able to achieve--and achieve greatly--through language. Language then is man's most important tool for progress because language facilitates communication of knowledge and ideas. Man can only advance by means of effective oral and written communication.

Communication is a prime essential for the maintenance of all institutions basic to society. At present, world conditions are such that communication systems which can be used with maximum efficiency are of greater urgency than ever. International conferences necessitate the use of some common language. Countries have better cooperation through better understanding of one another; a relationship enhanced by a language which can be understood and spoken by the majority. The shrinking world brought about

by advances in transportation and communication systems undreamed of several years ago has made possible more interaction among peoples. Such interaction is necessary in order to achieve every man's dream of peace and progress.

Since language plays an important role in communication, much emphasis has been placed on language teaching and learning in recent years. Linguists have been conceiving newer methods and techniques which they think would make language teaching more effective.

Furthermore, nowadays, it is no longer sufficient to learn just one's native tongue. One must learn a foreign language, especially an international one, in order to get ahead in the world.

Since the arrival of the Americans in the Philippines several decades ago, for example, English has always played a vital role in the lives of Filipinos. For this reason, Filipinos have been teaching and studying English for many years now.

Fortunately, English is one of the international languages of government and trade. Advances in technology, science, research, philosophy, history, business, art and culture are mostly available in English. To us Filipinos especially, "English has become our linguistic bridge to

the outside world, even more so than it is to the other regions of the Philippines."<sup>1</sup>

However, it has not always been smooth sailing for Filipino educators. They have constantly been facing numerous problems and difficulties which demand immediate solutions.

One of the most urgent of their problems is the inability of Filipino students to speak and write good English even after several years of continuous study. Even those who are already in college and those who are expected to have mastered the basic structures enough to be ready to use the language masterfully are often sorely handicapped.

Below is part of a paper written by a college freshman which illustrates this problem:

This is about Basilio and Crispin during at 11:30 when the sacristan went to them and pulled Crispin and he brought down stared and knock him on his forehead so that the fainted but when Father Damaso went their he stepped on Crispin so he was dead. But Basilio scept from the

---

<sup>1</sup>  
Fe Dacanay, Techniques and Procedures of Second Language Teaching (Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House, 1963), p. 11.

tanel down the walks and the Barack guard shots the boy, however he reached the house.<sup>2</sup>

The above writer is typical. He is neither the worst student nor the best in his class. Although this composition was written about fifteen years ago, still many English teachers can assert that an almost similar composition is still being written or spoken by a typical college freshman. It shows that the vocabulary and the sentence structure of the writing of the average student become so strange that it is rendered unintelligible.

This lamentable situation occurs despite the fact that many English teachers do their best to teach the series of subjects called Grammar and Composition well. Some administrators and English teachers have tried adopting new techniques but their pioneering efforts have met with little success. Today one still finds college students who are unable to express their ideas well.

Many educators and teachers of English are aware of this problem. In fact, a few have tried to devise various ways of improving language teaching in this country. Some educators work hard at finding solutions

---

2

Donald A. Alden, "The Teaching of English in the Philippines," Philippine Journal of Education, XXXVIII (June, 1959), p. 10.

for this problem because they believe that English still plays a vital part in the intellectual, cultural and aesthetic development of our youth and in maintaining contact with the more progressive countries of the world. Such communication with other countries is essential if we are to grow intellectually, culturally and economically.

From many indications, English will continue to be an important tool for communication for Filipinos for some time to come. The time for learning it may have been shortened, but the demands on the students' ability to understand, speak, read and write it are the same, if not greater. The teachers of English then must be helped to make efficient use of their time and effort in getting good results, through improved methods of teaching the subject.<sup>3</sup>

The grammar method. Although the traditional parts-of-speech approach to grammar has been condemned by many linguistic scientists, it is still, by far, the most widely taught and studied method of language teaching.

---

<sup>3</sup>  
Dacanay, op. cit., p. 10.

The reasons for this are clear. Part-of-speech classifications has behind it a tradition of over a thousand years of practical examination by some of the best minds in European culture. This examination has not solved the theoretical problems posed by the method, but it has enabled the method to be used in the practical mastery of languages. In addition to this, the study of grammar has also served as a basis for the theoretical examination of the language. In this type of examination the parts-of-speech grammarians have opened themselves to charges of unsoundness in their speculative efforts but they have also suggested ways for grammarians to deal with language as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

With the greater interest in the use of modern languages for communication, the inadequacy of the grammar-translation method became evident. Students who devoted years to the study of a foreign language were, in most cases, unable to use it. As a result, they have developed a distaste for foreign languages and an inferiority complex about language learning in general.

---

<sup>4</sup>Harry A. Greene, "English-Language, Grammar, and Composition," Encyclopedia of Educational Research. Edited by Walter S. Monroe (rev.; New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), p. 392.

The failures are readily understood today. Translation as a class activity was erroneously equated with understanding, speaking, reading and writing, which are very different skills and need to be learned as such. The ability to talk about the grammar of a language, to recite its rules, is also very different from the ability to speak and understand a language or to read and write it. Often, those who can use a language are unable to recite its rules, and those who can recite its rules may not be able to use it. Translation can be defended as a valuable skill in itself, but not as a substitute for practicing the language without recourse to translation. The description of the grammar of a language has its value for the linguist and the student of language but it is not a substitute for the actual use of the language.<sup>5</sup>

The Audio-lingual method. The most dynamic language teaching method today is the audio-lingual approach. The popularity of this approach is due to the nature of its objectives and the aura of scientific respectability attached to it. The audio-lingual method

---

<sup>5</sup> Robert Lado, Language Teaching, A Scientific Approach (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 4.



aims to impart to the learner the ability to understand and speak a foreign language. Because of the rapid increase in communication between peoples speaking different languages, there has been a world-wide awakening to the importance of being able to speak a Foreign language and understand it when spoken by the native speaker, and a growing impatience with methods which teach students to read a foreign language fluently and write it accurately but leave the student helpless before the steady flow of native speech and rapid fires of discussion.<sup>6</sup>

Yet while it is gaining adherents all over the world, the audio-lingual approach is being subjected to increasing criticism in its country of origin. In the United States, there are signs of deep frustration and disillusionment with the result of ten years of audio-lingual instruction. When language teachers gather at regional and national meetings, they are no longer invited to share in the excitement of new methodological directions. Instead, they are warned of the various

---

<sup>6</sup>  
Greene, op.cit., p. 392

dangers of the audio-lingual approach--if they are not oppressed by the lack of substance in its theoretical underpinnings.<sup>7</sup>

The new challenge. When Noam Chomsky<sup>8</sup> first published his theory of transformational generative grammar, it caused a stir in linguistic circles. Far from being just another theoretical aside, his work challenged the very foundation of structural grammars.

Chomsky made it clear that he was challenging behavioristic theories of language acquisition as well as phrase-structure grammars. Language learning is not a matter of habit and conditioning, he asserted, but a creative process--a rationalistic, cognitive activity rather than a response to outside stimuli.<sup>9</sup> This time it was the linguistic and psychological theories underlying the audio-lingual method that were under attack.

Chomsky's line of argument was that Skinner and the rest of the behaviorists and linguists who went along with him had only superficially examined the questions

---

<sup>7</sup>John B. Carroll, "Psychology, Research and Language Teaching" cited in Albert Valdman's Trends in Language Teaching (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966), pp. 93-106.

<sup>8</sup>Noam Chomsky, Syntactic Structures (New York: Humanities Press, 1957).

<sup>9</sup>A Forum Staff Article, "Current Trends in Language Teaching," English Teaching Forum, XII (Jan.-March, 1974), p. 17.

of learning and language use. Chomsky further asserts that the audio-lingual theory is too weak a theory to account for linguistic creativity; that there was more to language than a few simple patterns. He further attempted to show that these very patterns that students had been practising were only end products of a process in the brain that developed linguistic material of quite a different order. The patterns were only "surface structure". The "deep structure" contained phonological, syntactic and semantic forms.<sup>10</sup>

The pedagogical implications of Chomsky's theories, as summarized by Susumu Kuno,<sup>11</sup> call for the following:

1. Emphasis on meaningful practice.
2. Early use of reading and writing as well as speaking and listening.
3. Instruction for conscious attention to the characteristics of language, especially in regularities.

---

<sup>10</sup>Charles S. Haynes, "The Language-Lab 'Love Story'," English Teaching Forum, XI (September-October, 1973), p. 17.

<sup>11</sup>Susumu Kuno, "A Projection of Linguistic and Psycholinguistic Problems to be Explored Relevant to Foreign-Language Teaching," U. S. Peace Corps (unpublished), cited by Charles S. Haynes, "The Language Lab 'Love Story'," English Teaching Forum, XI (September-October, 1973), p. 17.

4. Emphasis on meanings of utterances.
5. Organization of course materials in terms of some deeper analysis of the language (then aural-oral, either provided or used.)

These different methodologies along with their conflicting ideas have left Filipino language teachers wondering about what to do. At this time, they have barely mastered the audio-lingual technique. Many are still wondering whether it was wise to have abandoned the grammar method. Now Chomsky comes along with his transformational-generative grammar. Should English teachers then forget the old methods and start learning a new one? Should they abandon all that they have learned of the old techniques? In what direction should they go? Are they left to flounder among existing methodologies and just hope that by chance they may strike the right keys?

Language teachers need not despair because there are scientific ways of finding the answers. One of these is by experimentation.

#### A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to find out which of the two methods of teaching English, Method I (Pure Audio-lingual Method) or Method II (Modified Audio-lingual

Method) is more effective in the teaching of English to first year college students, through analysis of the results of experimental teaching. Answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Which method will result in better learning as measured by written tests?
2. By which method would subjects with high mental ability learn better? Those with low mental ability?
3. By which method would subjects with high socio-economic status learn better? Those with low socio-economic status?
4. By which method would older subjects learn better? By which would the younger subjects?