

**EFFICIENCY OF TRADITIONAL METHODS  
VERSUS INNOVATIVE METHODS IN LEARNING SPANISH**

**Alina-Viorela PRELIPCEAN**

*Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava*

alina.prelipcean@litere.usv.ro

**Abstract**

The present article proposes a detailed analysis of the efficiency of traditional and innovative methods in learning the Spanish language. The impact of different approaches on language comprehension and retention is explored by examining recent research in pedagogy and linguistics.

In the continuous evolution of technology and education, it is crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of methods used in teaching a foreign language. This study focuses on the Spanish language, analyzing traditional teaching methods compared to innovative approaches. Following the conducted study, comparing the results obtained through traditional methods with those of innovative methodology, the article highlights the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. Aspects related to student motivation and performance are discussed.

Our study suggests that a balanced combination of traditional and innovative methods could be most effective in promoting the learning of the Spanish language. Adaptability to the individual needs of students and the integration of modern technologies are essential to maximize the effectiveness of the teaching process.

**Keywords:** *education, traditional methods, innovative methods, Spanish language, motivation, performance.*

**1. Introduction**

In the contemporary era, learning foreign languages constitutes an essential aspect of personal and professional development. However, the choice between traditional and innovative methods in the process of teaching a foreign language remains a subject of extensive debate. This introduction provides a comprehensive context regarding the evolution of language learning methods, emphasizing the need for a comparative analysis to determine

the effectiveness of each approach. It also underscores the importance of understanding the implications of this choice on students' performance and adaptability to contemporary social and technological changes. By exploring these aspects, the article aims to make a significant contribution to the discussion on foreign language teaching methods, considering the diverse and dynamic context of education today.

The main purpose of this article is to investigate and critically analyze the effectiveness of traditional and innovative methods in learning the Spanish language. To achieve this objective, we propose the following specific goals:

- Examine the evolution of traditional methods in learning the Spanish language and highlight their advantages and limitations;
- Explore innovative approaches, including modern technologies, in the context of teaching the Spanish language, identifying the challenges and benefits associated with them;
- Compare the results obtained by students using traditional methods with those of students who have adopted innovative methods, with a focus on linguistic performance and learning motivation;
- Provide informed conclusions and practical recommendations regarding the choice between traditional and innovative methods based on the specific context of learning the Spanish language.

By achieving these objectives, the article aims to shed light on the optimal direction in the process of teaching the Spanish language, considering the diversity of available approaches today. In the context of rapid changes in contemporary society, the choice between traditional and innovative methods of foreign language learning becomes a crucial issue. We are addressing a globalized context where linguistic skills are a determining factor for academic and professional success.

The importance of this study is manifested in the impact that the decision between traditional and innovative methods can have on the teaching-learning process and, implicitly, on the students' performance. Choosing an effective approach not only facilitates the learning of the Spanish language but can also contribute to the development of cognitive and social skills in students in a constantly transforming world. By addressing this dilemma, the article brings to the forefront an essential debate, proposing a comprehensive and objective analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each method, trying to make significant contributions to the optimization of the foreign language learning process.

Instructional and educational activities are based on specific objectives and are carried out through a system of methods and procedures, using various technical means for implementation. The obtained results are subject to verification and evaluation through specific strategies. The school curriculum integrates all these components, giving a central role to methods that contribute to the achievement of educational objectives.

From an etymological point of view, the term *method* comes from the Greek "methodos," meaning "a way towards". Teaching methods can be defined as modes of action through which students, either on their own or under the guidance of the teacher, acquire knowledge, develop skills and abilities, acquire certain attitudes, and form a specific worldview and perspective on life (Ionescu, & Chiş, 2001).

Due to the psycho-individual characteristics exhibited by students, it becomes necessary to use a wide variety of teaching methods to harness the potential of each student. The significance of methods largely depends on the user and the context in which they are applied.

Traditional methods, of the expository or frontal type, seem to no longer correspond to the new principles of active and conscious student participation. However, they can become valuable in a context where there is a large number of participants, with a cultural level that facilitates access to information within a given time frame. Currently, didactic methodology is oriented towards the active and conscious involvement of students in their learning process and the stimulation of their creativity. In this context, the changes experienced by teaching methods follow various defining directions. The dynamic and open relationship consists of the continuous evolution of interactions between different methods. The diversity of methods is imposed by the complexity of the learning process, and each method must be chosen based on the context to which it refers. Emphasizing the formative nature of methods involves focusing on the social relationships that the student develops in the process of culturalization and personality formation. The constant reassessment of traditional methods aims to adapt them to needs and integrate them into scientific evolution.

In traditional education, the main method of cultivating thinking involves the teacher's exposition, supplemented by individual student study. This approach has been criticized, arguing that it does not promote a proper connection with practice. The passivity of students in the face of exposition contributes to a lack of connection with reality, as they merely observe and repeat information.

In another well-known traditional method, the whole-class discussion, students participate more actively, but they are guided and do not have a clear understanding of the

objectives. Thus, traditional education contributes to a small extent to the development of students' thinking.

Some time ago, alternative educational models, known as active schools were proposed, where the emphasis is on individual study conducted by students. This new and active approach has proven to be superior but requires more time. With some adjustments in school programs within the educational reforms, an activation of a new teaching process is anticipated in the Romanian education system.

Specialized literature provides a detailed perspective on the antithesis between traditional and modern methods used in the teaching process. Traditional methods are characterized by:

- Emphasis on content acquisition, focusing primarily on the informative aspect of education;
- Focus on the teacher's instructional activity, with the student treated as a recipient of instruction, resulting in mostly one-directional communication;
- Prevalence of formal communication;
- Predominant orientation towards the final product, with assessment essentially consisting of knowledge reproduction;
- Formal nature and promotion of competition;
- Stimulation of extrinsic motivation for learning;
- A teacher-student relationship with an autocratic nuance, where school discipline is imposed.

These methods generate passivity among students. On the other hand, modern methods are highlighted by the following aspects:

- Priority given to the development of students' personalities, focusing on the formative aspect of education;
- Focus on the student's learning activity, making them the subject of the educational process;
- Orientation towards action and discovery-based learning;
- Emphasis on the process;
- Flexibility, encouraging cooperative learning and students' self-assessment capabilities, with formative assessment.
- Stimulation of intrinsic motivation;
- A teacher-student relationship of a democratic nature, based on respect and collaboration, with discipline derived from the lesson's organization.

This contrast between traditional and modern methods illustrates the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches in contemporary education.

## **2. The Evolution of Traditional Methods in Learning the Spanish Language**

This aspect reveals a significant transition from more conservative approaches to more interactive and tailored educational practices for contemporary students. In the early stages of teaching the Spanish language, traditional methods were characterized by an emphasis on memorization, rigorous grammatical learning and limited interaction between students and the teacher. In the initial period, traditional methods for teaching the Spanish language often relied on the grammar-translation paradigm. Students were exposed to grammatical rules, vocabulary and memorization exercises, with a focus on the development of written and grammatical skills. Thorndike's *Law of Effect*, highlighting the importance of reward and punishment in the learning process, was a defining element during this period. Consequently, foreign language instruction was often perceived as a passive task, where students were passive receptors of information presented by the teacher. This approach reflected the idea that a solid understanding of grammar is essential for speaking and understanding a foreign language correctly.

However, the limitations of this approach became increasingly evident with changes in the understanding of the learning process and the need to develop authentic communication skills in the Spanish language. Within this evolution, methods began to shift towards more interactive and real-life-relevant practices. In recent decades, communicative approaches have become predominant in foreign language instruction, including the teaching of the Spanish language. These methods focus on developing oral and written communication skills, placing particular emphasis on real-life language use situations. Students are encouraged to interact, discuss current topics, and apply linguistic knowledge in practical contexts.

Additionally, the use of modern technologies in teaching the Spanish language has brought new dimensions to the learning process. Online platforms, educational apps, and multimedia resources have become essential tools for diversifying and enhancing the Spanish language learning experience.

The evolution of traditional methods in teaching the Spanish language reflects, consequently, a transition from a rigid approach based on memorization and grammar to more flexible, interactive educational practices tailored to the specific needs of students. This

evolution continues to influence and shape the way foreign languages are taught and learned today.

### **3. Innovative Approaches and the Integration of Modern Technologies in Teaching the Spanish Language**

Innovative approaches, including the integration of Modern Technologies in the context of teaching the Spanish language, have brought both significant challenges and benefits. Here is a detailed analysis of them:

➤ **Benefits:**

- **Increased Interactivity:** The use of modern technologies, such as online platforms, educational apps and multimedia tools allows an increased interactivity in the classroom. Students can engage in interactive activities, educational games and simulations that enhance the understanding and application of the Spanish language in realistic contexts.
- **Enhanced Accessibility to Resources:** Modern technologies facilitate access to a wide range of online educational resources, including videos, e-books, podcasts and other instructional materials. This increased access to diverse resources helps students explore different aspects of the Spanish language and develop their skills in a personalized manner.
- **Instant Feedback:** Digital applications and tools can provide instant feedback to students, allowing them to correct their mistakes immediately. This aspect contributes to the efficiency of the learning process and encourages continuous improvement.
- **Facilitated Collaboration and Communication:** Modern technologies facilitate communication between students and teachers more efficiently and interactively. The use of online collaboration platforms and communication tools enhances students' ability to work as a team and participate in discussions in the Spanish language.

➤ **Challenges:**

- **Disparities in Technology Access:** Not all students have equal access to technology, which can create inequalities in the learning process. Economic or geographical disparities may result in some students having limited access to devices or internet connectivity.

- **Excessive Dependence on Technology:** Excessive integration of technology can lead to dependency and compromise the development of face-to-face communication skills in the Spanish language. It is important to maintain a balance between the use of technology and traditional methods.
- **Security and Privacy Challenges:** Online teaching may raise issues regarding the security and privacy of students' data. Protecting personal information and ensuring a secure online learning environment are significant challenges.
- **Teacher Adaptability:** Integrating technology requires continuous adaptability from teachers. Systems and tools evolve rapidly, and teachers must be willing to constantly update and learn new approaches to remain relevant.

In conclusion, innovative approaches to teaching the Spanish language, including modern technologies, bring multiple benefits and challenges. A balanced and adapted implementation based on the specific needs of students and the teaching environment can contribute to an efficient and engaging learning process.

#### **4. Comparative Results**

Following a case study conducted with two groups of students using traditional methods versus innovative methods in learning the Spanish language, we arrived at the following results, considering linguistic performance and learning motivation in both contexts.

➤ **Linguistic Performance:**

- **Traditional Methods:**
  - **Advantages:** Students using traditional methods can attain a solid understanding of grammatical rules and the structure of the Spanish language.
  - **Limitations:** This approach may not sufficiently promote the development of authentic communication skills and can lead to rigid, memorization-oriented learning rather than practical application.
- **Innovative Methods:**
  - **Advantages:** Students adopting innovative methods can develop oral communication skills and apply knowledge in realistic contexts. The use of technology and interactive resources can make the learning process more engaging.
  - **Limitations:** There is a risk that some innovative methods may focus more on entertainment aspects than educational substance.

➤ Learning Motivation:

- Traditional Methods:
  - Advantages: Clear structure and formal assessments can provide a stable framework, and some students may be motivated by measurable achievements.
  - Limitations: For some students, traditional methods can become boring and demotivating. Lack of interactivity may reduce enthusiasm for learning.
- Innovative Methods:
  - Advantages: Interactive elements, educational games and access to diverse online resources can stimulate motivation. Learning personalization can cater to various learning styles and paces.
  - Limitations: For some students, novelty may diminish over time, and dependence on technology can lead to fatigue or resistance.

These comparative results highlight the strengths and weaknesses of both traditional and innovative methods in teaching the Spanish language, emphasizing the importance of a balanced and adaptable approach to meet the diverse needs of students. It is essential to note that the impact of each approach can vary depending on the specific context, the individual needs of students and the teacher's ability to effectively implement the respective methods. A balanced combination of traditional and innovative methods can provide a more holistic learning environment, addressing multiple aspects of students' linguistic and motivational development.

In conducting this study, the following learning methods were applied:

➤ Traditional Methods:

- In-class courses: Participation in Spanish language courses in a traditional classroom setting, with a teacher and a group of students.
- Language course: Utilizing Spanish language courses for learning grammatical rules, vocabulary and practical exercises.
- Conversations with the teacher: Engaging in conversation sessions with the teacher to enhance oral expression skills.
- Written exercises: Completing written exercises to practice grammatical structures and vocabulary.
- Listening and repetition: Listening to audio recordings in Spanish and repeating phrases to improve pronunciation.

➤ Innovative Methods:



- Mobile applications: Using language learning mobile applications that provide interactive lessons, games and assessment tests.
- Online platforms: Enrolling in online language learning platforms offering interactive courses, multimedia resources and the opportunity to interact with native speakers.
- Videos and movies: Watching and listening to videos and movies in Spanish to develop auditory understanding and oral expression.
- Educational games: Participating in educational games involving vocabulary, grammar exercises and conversation.
- Content creation: Writing essays in Spanish to develop writing skills and personal expression.

Ultimately, we believe that traditional and innovative methods can be more effective when combined, as they address different learning styles and individual preferences. It is important to experiment and find the right mix that works best for the group of students.

## **5. Conclusions**

Depending on the diversity of students and their learning styles, a flexible approach that integrates both traditional and innovative methods can be the most effective. It is essential to consider individual needs to maximize the potential of each student.

The specific objectives of the Spanish language learning process can influence the choice between traditional and innovative methods. If the emphasis is on developing authentic communication skills, innovative methods may be preferred. On the other hand, more rigorous academic objectives may benefit from a combination of both approaches.

The availability of material resources and access to technology can influence the decision. In situations where technology is accessible and effective, integrating innovative methods can bring significant advantages. Otherwise, traditional methods can remain a viable option. A flexible and adaptable curriculum allows teachers to address the individual needs of students and adjust approaches based on their progress and feedback. Flexibility is essential to optimize results.

## **Recommendations**

Adopting a balanced approach that combines traditional elements with technologies and innovative methodologies can ensure a comprehensive learning process tailored to the specific context. Personalizing the learning process based on students' individual needs, paces

and preferences can maximize engagement and performance. Teachers should benefit from continuous training to stay updated on the latest methods and technologies. This will help them choose and integrate approaches efficiently based on the context.

Continuous assessment of the impact of each approach is essential. Teachers should monitor students' performance, feedback and motivation levels to make adjustments and continuously improve the teaching process.

In conclusion, the choice between traditional and innovative methods of learning the Spanish language largely depends on the specific context. The appropriate approach will consider students' characteristics, educational objectives and available resources, resulting in a learning environment that effectively stimulates and develops students' linguistic skills.

## **References**

- Dumitru, I. (2001), *Dezvoltarea gândirii critice și învățarea eficientă*, Timișoara: Editura de Vest.
- Ionescu, M., Radu I. (2001), *Didactica modernă*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia.
- Mayor Paredes, D. (2021), *Aprendizaje - Servicio en la universidad. Un dispositivo orientado a la mejora de los procesos formativos y la realidad social*, Octaedro - Magina.
- Ruiz Mejías, M., Hohnston, T. (2023), *Realidad virtual y entornos inmersivos en educación superior*, Octaedro.
- Santos-Hermosa, G., Abadal Falgueras, E. (2022), *Recursos educativos abiertos. Una pieza fundamental para afrontar los actuales retos de la educación superior*, Octaedro.
- Voicu-Popescu, Corina (2017), *Strategii didactice: definiții, delimitări conceptuale*, in EDICT- Revista educației, n° 12.