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COURSE WORK

ON SUBJECT: WORLD LITERATURE

**THEME: THE HISTORY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE
TEACHING**

TEACHER: D.MAMATOVA

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THE HISTORY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Plan:

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. History of foreign language education**
- 3. The Classical Method**
- 4. The Direct Method**
- 5. The Audiolingual Method**

1. Introduction

Although the need to learn foreign languages is almost as old as human history itself, the origins of modern language education has its roots in the study and teaching of Latin. 500 years ago Latin was the dominant language of education, commerce, religion and government in much of the Western world. However, by the end of the 16th century, French, Italian and English displaced Latin as the languages of spoken and written communication. The study of Latin diminished from the study of a living language to be used in the real world to a subject in the school curriculum. Such decline brought about a new justification for its study. It was then claimed that its study developed intellectual abilities and the study of Latin grammar became an end in an of itself. "Grammar schools" from the 16th to 18th centuries focused on teaching the grammatical aspects of Classical Latin. Advanced students continued grammar study with the addition of rhetoric.

The study of modern languages did not become part of the curriculum of European schools until the 18th century. Based on the purely academic study of Latin, students of modern languages did much of the same exercises, studying grammatical rules and translating abstract sentences. Oral work was a minimum with focus on memorization of grammatical rules and possibly the ability to read in the target language.

Innovation in foreign language teaching began in the 19th century and, very rapidly, in the 20th century, leading to a number of different methodologies, sometimes conflicting, each trying to be a major improvement over the last or other contemporary methods. Unfortunately, those looking at the history of foreign language education in the 20th century and the methods of teaching (such as those related below) might be tempted to think that it is a history of failure. Very few who study foreign languages in U.S. universities as a major manage to reach something called "minimum professional proficiency" and even "reading knowledge" required for PhD degree is comparable only to what second year language students read. In addition, very few American researchers can read and assess information written in languages other than English and even a number famous linguists are monolingual.

However, anecdotal evidence for successful second or foreign language learning is easy to find, leading to a discrepancy between these cases and the failure of most language programs to help make second language acquisition

research emotionally-charged. Older methods and approaches such as the grammar translation method or the direct method are disposed of and even ridiculed as newer methods and approaches are invented and promoted as the only and complete solution to the problem of the high failure rates of foreign language students. Most books on language teaching list the various methods that have been used in the past, often ending with the author's new method. These new methods seem to be created full-blown from the authors' minds, as they generally give no credence to what was done before and how it relates to the new method. For example, descriptive linguists seem to claim unhesitatingly that before their work, which led to the audio-lingual method developed for the U.S. Army in World War II, there were no scientifically-based language teaching methods. However, there is significant evidence to the contrary. It is also often inferred or even stated that older methods were completely ineffective or have died out completely when even the oldest methods are still used (e.g. the Berlitz version of the direct method). Much of the reason for this is that proponents of new methods have been so sure that their ideas are so new and so correct that they could not conceive that the older ones have enough validity to cause controversy and emphasis on new scientific advances has tended to blind researchers to precedents in older work.

The development of foreign language teaching does not have a linear development. There have been two major branches in the field, empirical and theoretical, which have almost completely-separate histories, with each gaining ground over the other at one point in time or another. Examples of researchers on the empiricist side are Jespersen, Palmer, Leonard Bloomfield who promote mimicry and memorization with pattern drills. These methods follow from the basic empiricist position that language acquisition is basically habits formed by conditioning and drill. In its most extreme form, language learning is basically the same as any other learning in any other species, human language being essentially the same as communication behaviors seen in other species. On the other, are Francois Gouin, M.D. Berlitz, Elime de Sauzé, whose rationalist theories of language acquisition dovetail with linguistic work done by Noam Chomsky and others. These have led to a wider variety of teaching methods from grammar-translation, to Gouin's "series method" or the direct methods of Berlitz and de Sauzé. With these methods, students generate original and meaningful sentences to gain a functional knowledge of the rules of grammar. This follows from the rationalist position that man is born to think and language use is a uniquely human

trait impossible in other species. Given that human languages share many common traits, the idea is that humans share a universal grammar which is built into our brain structure. This allows us to create sentences that have never been heard before, but can still be immediately understood by anyone who understands the specific language being spoken. The rivalry of the two camps is intense, with little communication or cooperation between them.

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es, the English language teaching tradition has been subjected to a tremendous change, especially throughout the twentieth century. Perhaps more than any other discipline, this tradition has been practiced, in various adaptations, in language classrooms all around the world for centuries. While the teaching of Maths or Physics, that is, the methodology of teaching Maths or Physics, has, to a greater or lesser extent, remained the same, this is hardly the case with English or language teaching in general. As will become evident in this short paper, there are some milestones in the development of this tradition, which we will briefly touch upon, in an attempt to reveal the importance of research in the selection and implementation of the optimal methods and techniques for language teaching and learning. A. P. R. Howatt's second edition of *A History of English Language Teaching* is slightly larger than the first, documenting the history of methodology and writing about it, and again reminding us that this "new" field, exploding in its five minutes of fame in history's big picture, has had a long fuse and a cyclical past.

The second edition is divided into three parts, covering roughly 1400-1800 in the first, 1800-1900 in the second, and 1900 to the present in the third; however, each section is divided differently. In the first part, section one deals with early years of English teaching in England and Europe, while the second deals with various writings that aimed to explain or change the language. Part Two is divided geographically, with the first section dealing with the British Empire and the kinds of English education found in various parts of it, while the second deals with English language teaching in Europe and the development of various language teaching philosophies. Finally, Part Three is divided into a section that is an expanded narrative covering change through time (three phases of modern English

teaching); then, the final section deals with "aspects" of English language teaching in the modern period, taking a closer look at four crucial movements in the field. The second edition omits a translated nineteenth-century work by Edward Viator which is now more available, but includes an essay by H. G. Widdowson which provides important insight.

As in all histories, one meets a splendid array of characters, people who have traveled the world, mostly dead white men, of course, but interesting dead white men, who at one point stumbled onto teaching English, and then contributed to it in one way or another, usually through writing. For example, among others, we meet Florio and Holyband, teachers of refugees in England, and Comenius, who "was a genius, possibly the only one that the history of language teaching can claim" (p. 44); we meet grammarians and spelling reformers of the early days like John Hart (1566) and Ben Jonson; other characters like John Wallis, who tried to free the description of English from excessive Latin influences; and Noah Webster, founder of American English; we see reformers of the nineteenth century, such as Marcel Prendergast and Otto Jespersen; we see Henry Sweet and the rise of phonetics, and along with it the idea of the primacy of speech and the importance of a scientific approach to language teaching; we see a dispute between Michael West and Charles Ogden over Basic English, and the work of Harold Palmer, who could also be said to promote basic oral fluency.

Howatt brings a historian's delight in pointing out that trends and tensions in the field are not only reflected in earlier writings, but presaged by them. Holyband, for example, wrote about the tension between inductive and deductive learning in the sixteenth century; Jacotot (1770-1840) was the first to write about the "irrelevance of explanation," and the function of the teacher "to respond to the learner, not to direct and control him by explaining things in advance" (pp. 169-170). We see the beginnings of the Natural Method and its "true roots . . . deep in the art of teaching itself" (p. 215); we also see the roots of the Direct Method, the Grammar Translation method (named by its detractors for the features they disliked most), and Task-based instruction. The author carries us through the 1960's, a "decade of acronyms" (p. 246) in which the field of TEFL/TESL came into its own, documenting the founding of ATEFL, later IATEFL, TESOL, and a host of others, leading us into the modern era and its methods, along with the dominance of the communicative approach.

I came away from Howatt's work with a sense of disconnect between theory and practice, expressed in Widdowson's essay: that "the actuality of practice is for the most part unrecorded, and indeed to a large extent unaffected by the shifts of thinking that have been charted here" (p. 369). In the sense that method theory is covered completely, while teaching practice cannot be, the book should refer to the history of teaching theory, rather than the history of teaching itself (though, as Howatt points out, "ELT" as an acronym has been used in several ways). This gap is only heightened by the obvious: that while the documenters of thinking in the area of ELT for the most part appear to have been European men, going down through the ages, certainly the vast majority of practitioners have not been; and, though we get a tour of the colonies as a way of seeing how different environments (and purposes for teaching) can affect what happens in the classroom and what subsequently develops in the world of theory, we seem to be missing pieces of that larger puzzle, the center of which may have shifted from Howatt's UK, or at least become more decentralized, in recent years. Another example is his treatment of Krashen, whose enormous influence among teachers in recent years has belied the scorn directed at him by acquisitionists and theorists; Howatt characterizes him only as one "who put all his money on one specific process: the comprehension of meaning" (p. 257) and doesn't address the gulf caused by the proliferation of his theories.

I have also long felt that some of the tension in language teaching springs merely from the setup of the classroom: that while learning is by nature inductive, the classroom is by nature deductive, or at the very least, tending toward exploration and understanding of the structure and rules of the language, rather than toward use and mastery of it as a system.

A final source of tension in the field is its certain sense of self-denigration, which has seemed to follow it around in spite of its phenomenal success, and it's hard to decide whether to accuse Mr. Howatt of causing it (his comment about Comenius being an obvious example), merely perpetuating it, or rather getting caught up in it, in the sense that it is certainly larger than just the common teacher's sense that we could be getting more respect (if not remuneration) teaching something else, or doing something else. Howatt carefully shows us English as a language, struggling for a sense of self as it grows in the shadow of French and Latin; while it is not entirely possible to separate the teaching of English from the teaching of other languages, it is also probably true that a survey of early writing

about language teaching would be as free of Latinate influence as Esperanto. We see the field stumble through years in which the learning of English is merely a prerequisite for learning, but not really part of it, into the modern era, in which the methods of teaching carry enormous weight in terms of their influence, not only on the teaching of other languages, but also on what happens throughout the world in a number of fields. The gap between its enormous importance today and the stunning indifference it was offered in the past shows through clearly, in spite of Howatt's careful research and attention; his early research has to cover grammars of English and attempts to reform it, as there simply isn't much on methods of teaching it.

A final irony in the situation is that, while linguists have spent decades looking for "universals" in world languages, or any languages, young English teachers have spread out across the globe, almost accidentally finding what little the language may have in common with others, in order to help so many others make sense of it; thus, what actually happens in these classroom situations may be closer to those mystical universals than one would think. To look in the rearview mirror at one's own language and the way it's put together is, in that sense, of utmost importance. At the same time I felt a little put down by the idea that the teaching of English was not always considered as important as it could have been, I also realized that in fact, the best descriptions of it, the clearest view of it, was usually offered by those who had in fact seen it from other eyes, the eyes of outsiders:

It is not, perhaps, entirely inappropriate that the best grammar of English in the seventeenth century should have been written with foreigners in mind, or that the best grammars of the twentieth century . . . should be rooted in the same soil. (p. 101).

In our field, as in most others, best understanding of the subject matter can be achieved through the widest array of perspectives, and this alone is, in spite of all else, the most important characteristic of this modern era.

Despite the fact that I could obviously judge the topic of the book from the title, this history of TEFL and TESOL was in no way what I expected before I started reading it. How that was a good and bad thing for me is examined below, along with some ideas on who else this book might be of interest to and a summary of some of the most interesting information in it.

Perhaps the greatest surprise for me was the fact that Section 2 (Aspects of English Language Teaching since 1900), which already takes me back further than almost anything I thought touched on my teaching today, takes up only 140 pages of a 417 page book- and that includes 20 pages of A Perspective on Recent Trends by H G Widdowson. With 50 pages being taken up with the Introduction, A Chronology of English Language Teaching, the bibliography and the index, that leaves 220 pages for the teaching of English as a second and foreign language before 1900, a time that I had hardly knew our job existed in. This is dealt with in two parts (1400-1800 and 1800-1900), divided in sections on Practical Language Teaching, On ‘Fixing’ Language, English Language in the Empire, and English Language Teaching in Europe. The post-1900 part is divided into sections on “...the Making of a Profession” and “Aspects of...”. Each section is further divided into chapters, with 21 chapters in total in the book.

The first chapter (Practical Language Teaching- The Early Years) and the story of English Language Teaching starts with most people in England becoming monolingual in English, with French needing to be learnt as a foreign language for the first time, the earliest surviving book to that purpose dating from 1396. The author explains the first grammar of English (for native speakers), the “catechistic method of language teaching”, and the first textbooks solely to teach English as a foreign language. These textbooks sprung up after the arrival of the French-speaking Huguenot refugees in England in the 1570s and 1580s, following “double-manuals” meant to teach (mainly) French to English speakers as well as English to speakers of French, which had been printed from the time of William Caxton. A lot of detail is given on these double-manuals, which seem to have been quite similar to modern phrasebooks but with additions such as bilingual prayers, including the first EFL teacher we know by name, Gabriel Meurier (although he probably mainly taught French).

The second chapter (Refugiate in a Strange Country) takes up the teaching of Huguenot refugees in more detail, with an examination of the lives and works of three refugee teachers of English (although again they spent more time teaching French), Jacques Bellot, Claudius Holyband and John Florio. It includes the interesting idea that teachers of this period taught with translation because there was no analysis of English available that would have allowed them describe it all otherwise, perhaps an interesting parallel for the knowledge of the language and the use of translation all over the world for non-native and non-specialist teachers

now. Like the earlier double-manuals, language textbooks at this time were based on full (imaginary) dialogues containing the practical language people needed day to day, whether that be commercial vocabulary or language for day to day life. They also included things such as some grammar, pronunciation (including the first appearance of what is probably still the most famous minimal pair- “ship” and “sheep”!), vocabulary lists, examinations of typical vocabulary confusions, substitution tables and semi phonetic transcriptions. It seems proverbs and sayings were standard at that time (something that seems to carry on every time someone somewhere with no training tries to design an English course) including, bizarrely, a list of the mystical meanings of plants and flowers. Although some of the textbooks by these three authors continued to be used into the next century, no evidence is given here of an influence on the next generation of language teachers and textbooks- let alone on English teaching, as all three taught and wrote about mainly if not only other languages.

The third and fourth chapter also more relevant to the teaching of foreign languages in the UK than to the teaching of English to foreigners, including “what must be the best-selling language teaching textbook ever written” (despite the small world population at the time?) “A Short Introduction of Grammar”, a Latin textbook also known as “Lily’s Grammar”, published in 1509 and still in occasional use in the 19th century. In this case the relevance to ELT is made clearer, as the “mindless rote-learning and the custom of writing sample sentences” was something that affected the teaching of all languages and the reactions against these methods. These reform movements started as early as a century after the publishing of this book, although it takes a leap of imagination to see methods like ‘double-translation’ as a forward looking methodology from our present point of view. The philosophy of Joseph Webbe, however, who wrote in 1622 that “no man can run speedily to the mark of language that is shackled and ingiv’d with grammar precepts”, seems amazingly modern. In fact, the author draws an interesting parallel with the Henry Sweet and, on the other side, the Direct Method teachers in the late 19th century. Unfortunately, there is again no evidence on Webbe having a direct influence on the next generation of teachers and textbook writers.

In the next chapter the author explains the life story (in some detail) and professional life of Comenius. In this case the author seems to be claiming that he had more importance, indeed to have been a “central and complex figure in the

history of language teaching” and was “a genius, possibly the only one that the history of language teaching can claim” (pg 44), although as he taught Latin rather than English and “his educational plans were too ambitious and unrealistic... and they were never put to a real test” (pg 44) and “it is doubtful whether his methodological ideas exerted much influence until they were re-discovered in the 19th century”, I could not work out from this book why his story and methodology, while interesting, was relevant, different or important. A quote of his will quite possibly echo down the ages to our students though- “the complete and detailed knowledge of a language, no matter which it be, is quite unnecessary, and it is absurd and useless on the part of anyone to try and attain it”!

As should be obvious from the description above, a lot of the information given in this early part of the book is not directly related to the Teaching of English to Foreigners (as was long the official, non-PC, name for TESOL in the UK). Having said that, most of the rest of the information included was interesting, both as history and as a completely different (for me) way of looking at teaching. The author sometimes explains the relevance of such things to the history of ELT, but at other times seems to be following a personal interest that made me think that it was based on original research originally by author, something that in my experience is often the case with books that more or less stand alone in their subject area. This is true throughout the book, and I often found myself thinking “Well, that’s very interesting, but how is it relevant?” or “Why write about that piece of information/ person/ movement rather than any other?”

As someone who has never read a book claiming to be about the history of ELT (although books about TEFL methodologies I have read are a little similar), when the author wrote a few times that the interesting but apparently obscure person whose entire career had just been described “should be better known”, I personally would’ve been happier with my first book on the subject sticking mainly to telling me more about facts and people I already thought I knew something about or would be showing my ignorance by not knowing about. To give some examples, as a practicing language teacher I was surprised to find little or nothing about the importance (or not) of Mario Rinvolucri and the other Pilgrims School HLT authors, John and Liz Soars’ Headway, Streamline Departures, Michael Swan, Jeremy Harmer’s The Practice of English Language etc, Recipes for Tired Teachers or English Teaching Professional magazine. If my surprise was due to me being too focused on recent history or on classroom

teaching rather than Applied Linguistics I am not sure, but as with the teaching of other kinds of history I often thought that it would be easier to understand, remember and see the importance of the information if it was more obviously tied closely to things I already knew. There were quite a few examples of this, however, such as information on the person who Doctor Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* was based on, the background to the setting up of what became the CELTA, and the early history of the British Council and the much more central role it used to take in ELT.

To look at the things the book does mention that are closer to us in time and maybe relevance, let's take a look at the last few chapters. The last chapter is a summary of recent trends and some ideas of where they are going in the deep but slightly rambling style that was also true of the other H G Widdowson books I have read. The last chapter by the main author of the book, A P R Howatt, deals with "The Notion of Communication", and is a surprisingly successful attempt to tie together the trends of CLT, ESP, the Threshold Level Project, discourse analysis, decolonisation, immigration in Britain, and the general progressive atmosphere of the 60s and early 70s, things that I had no idea were connected. It also explains some of the earlier roots of these things, including referring back to earlier chapters, and looking back I might have enjoyed the book even more if I had read it backwards starting here.

Before that we have "Old Patterns and New Directions", starting in 1945 and dealing with things I had heard of like the *Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (OUP, 1952), *A General Service List of English Words* (1953) and the *Audiolingual Method*, plus plenty of stuff I had never heard of but found interesting and occasionally thought provoking about the present state of ELT. And so it continues until we meet reach the year 1900 60 pages and three chapters earlier.

The book claims that "the basic intention of this book is to try and illuminate the teaching of English to speakers of other languages by exploring some of its origins and some of the ideas that have influenced and moulded it over the years" (Introduction pg 1), i.e. it should be of interest to every working English teacher. It is partly successful in that aim. By showing the long history of ideas and old debates that seem very recent it can help you get some perspective on the theories being discussed now, and by taking them away from the context and personalities that are associated with them now it can help you look at them in a new and more

rational way. For most people, though, a more detailed account of the recent history of ELT, if it is available, might be of more use or interest. I would, however, recommend this book for people who, like me, are interested in history at least as much as ELT and can therefore combine their two areas of interest. Otherwise, it is basically just a textbook for people studying a course on the History of ELT or Applied Linguistics (perhaps I was naive to expect more?), but also of interest to anyone who is doing any kind of academic writing who would like to include some details of the background to their topic with a broader than usual historical scope. If you think you might be interested in any of the topics I have mentioned (or any of the ones in the 300 years of history I had to leave out of this review due to lack of space), this book is certainly easy to read and understand, bar a few parts, easily skipped, where there is assumed knowledge that I, for one, did not have.

The Classical Method

In the Western world back in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, foreign language learning was associated with the learning of Latin and Greek, both supposed to promote their speakers' intellectuality. At the time, it was of vital importance to focus on grammatical rules, syntactic structures, along with rote memorisation of vocabulary and translation of literary texts. There was no provision for the oral use of the languages under study; after all, both Latin and Greek were not being taught for oral communication but for the sake of their speakers' becoming "scholarly?" or creating an illusion of "erudition." Late in the nineteenth century, the Classical Method came to be known as the Grammar Translation Method, which offered very little beyond an insight into the grammatical rules attending the process of translating from the second to the native language.

It is widely recognised that the Grammar Translation Method is still one of the most popular and favourite models of language teaching, which has been rather stalwart and impervious to educational reforms, remaining a standard and sine qua non methodology. With hindsight, we could say that its contribution to language learning has been lamentably limited, since it has shifted the focus from the real language to a "dissected body" of nouns, adjectives, and prepositions, doing nothing to enhance a student's communicative ability in the foreign language.

This approach was developed initially as a reaction to the grammar-translation approach in an attempt to integrate more use of the target language in instruction.

Lessons begin with a dialogue using a modern conversational style in the target language. Material is first presented orally with actions or pictures. The mother tongue is NEVER, NEVER used. There is no translation. The preferred type of exercise is a series of questions in the target language based on the dialogue or an anecdotal narrative. Questions are answered in the target language. Grammar is taught inductively--rules are generalized from the practice and experience with the target language. Verbs are used first and systematically conjugated only much later after some oral mastery of the target language. Advanced students read literature for comprehension and pleasure. Literary texts are not analyzed grammatically. The culture associated with the target language is also taught inductively. Culture is considered an important aspect of learning the language.

The Direct Method

The last two decades of the nineteenth century ushered in a new age. In his *The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign Languages* (1880), Francois Gouin described his "harrowing" experiences of learning German, which helped him gain insights into the intricacies of language teaching and learning. Living in Hamburg for one year, he attempted to master the German language by dint of memorising a German grammar book and a list of the 248 irregular German verbs, instead of conversing with the natives. Exulting in the security that the grounding in German grammar offered him, he hastened to go to the University to test his knowledge. To no avail. He could not understand a word! After his failure, he decided to memorise the German roots, but with no success. He went so far as to memorise books, translate Goethe and Schiller, and learn by heart 30,000 words in a dictionary, only to meet with failure. Upon returning to France, Gouin discovered that his three-year-old nephew had managed to become a chatterbox of French - a fact that made him think that the child held the secret to learning a language. Thus, he began observing his nephew and came to the conclusion (arrived at by another researcher a century before him!) that language learning is a matter of transforming perceptions into conceptions and then using language to represent these conceptions. Equipped with this knowledge, he devised a teaching method premised upon these insights. It was against this background that the Series

Method was created, which taught learners directly a "series" of connected sentences that are easy to understand. For instance,

I stretch out my arm. I take hold of the handle. I turn the handle. I open the door. I pull the door.

Nevertheless, this approach to language learning was short-lived and, only a generation later, gave place to the Direct Method, posited by Charles Berlitz. The basic tenet of Berlitz's method was that second language learning is similar to first language learning. In this light, there should be lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no translation, and little if any analysis of grammatical rules and syntactic structures. In short, the principles of the Direct Method were as follows:

- Classroom instruction was conducted in the target language
- There was an inductive approach to grammar
- Only everyday vocabulary was taught
- Concrete vocabulary was taught through pictures and objects, while abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas

The Direct Method enjoyed great popularity at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth but it was difficult to use, mainly because of the constraints of budget, time, and classroom size. Yet, after a period of decline, this method has been revived, leading to the emergence of the.

The Audiolingual Method

This method is based on the principles of behavior psychology. It adapted many of the principles and procedures of the Direct Method, in part as a reaction to the lack of speaking skills of the Reading Approach.

New material is presented in the form of a dialogue. Based on the principle that language learning is habit formation, the method fosters dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases and over-learning. Structures are sequenced and taught one at a time. Structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills. Little or no grammatical explanations are provided; grammar is taught inductively. Skills are sequenced: Listening, speaking, reading and writing are developed in order. Vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context. Teaching points are determined by contrastive analysis between L1 and L2. There is abundant use of language laboratories, tapes and visual aids. There is an extended pre-reading period at the beginning of the course. Great importance is given to precise native-

like pronunciation. Use of the mother tongue by the teacher is permitted, but discouraged among and by the students. Successful responses are reinforced; great care is taken to prevent learner errors. There is a tendency to focus on manipulation of the target language and to disregard content and meaning

The outbreak of World War II heightened the need for Americans to become orally proficient in the languages of their allies and enemies alike. To this end, bits and pieces of the Direct Method were appropriated in order to form and support this new method, the "Army Method," which came to be known in the 1950s as the Audiolingual Method.

The Audiolingual Method was based on linguistic and psychological theory and one of its main premises was the scientific descriptive analysis of a wide assortment of languages. On the other hand, conditioning and habit-formation models of learning put forward by behaviouristic psychologists were married with the pattern practices of the Audiolingual Method. The following points sum up the characteristics of the method:

- Dependence on mimicry and memorisation of set phrases
- Teaching structural patterns by means of repetitive drills (??Repetitio est mater studiorum??)
- No grammatical explanation
- Learning vocabulary in context
- Use of tapes and visual aids
- Focus on pronunciation
- Immediate reinforcement of correct responses

But its popularity waned after 1964, partly because of Wilga Rivers's exposure of its shortcomings. It fell short of promoting communicative ability as it paid undue attention to memorisation and drilling, while downgrading the role of context and world knowledge in language learning. After all, it was discovered that language was not acquired through a process of habit formation and errors were not necessarily bad or pernicious.

The "Designer" Methods of the 1970s

The Chomskyan revolution in linguistics drew the attention of linguists and language teachers to the "deep structure" of language, while psychologists took account of the affective and interpersonal nature of learning. As a result, new methods were proposed, which attempted to capitalise on the importance of psychological factors in language learning. David Nunan (1989: 97) referred to

these methods as "designer" methods, on the grounds that they took a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Let us have a look at two of these "designer" methods.

Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia promised great results if we use our brain power and inner capacities. Lozanov (1979) believed that we are capable of learning much more than we think. Drawing upon Soviet psychological research on yoga and extrasensory perception, he came up with a method for learning that used relaxation as a means of retaining new knowledge and material. It stands to reason that music played a pivotal role in his method. Lozanov and his followers tried to present vocabulary, readings, role-plays and drama with classical music in the background and students sitting in comfortable seats. In this way, students became "suggestible."

Of course, suggestopedia offered valuable insights into the "superlearning" powers of our brain but it was demolished on several fronts. For instance, what happens if our classrooms are bereft of such amenities as comfortable seats and Compact Disk players? Certainly, this method is insightful and constructive and can be practised from time to time, without necessarily having to adhere to all its premises. A relaxed mind is an open mind and it can help a student to feel more confident and, in a sense, pliable.

The Silent Way

The Silent Way rested on cognitive rather than affective arguments, and was characterised by a problem-solving approach to learning. Gattegno (1972) held that it is in learners' best interests to develop independence and autonomy and cooperate with each other in solving language problems. The teacher is supposed to be silent - hence the name of the method - and must disabuse himself of the tendency to explain everything to them.

The Silent Way came in for an onslaught of criticism. More specifically, it was considered very harsh, as the teacher was distant and, in general lines, the classroom environment was not conducive to learning.

Strategies-based instruction

The work of O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and others before and after them, emphasised the importance of style awareness and strategy development in ensuring mastery of a foreign language. In this vein, many textbooks and entire syllabi offered guidelines on constructing strategy-building activities. Below therer

is an example of a list of the "Ten Commandments" for good language learning (taken from Brown, H. D. [2000: 137]):

	Teacher's Version	Learner's Version
	Lower inhibitions	Fear not!
	Encourage risk-taking	Dive in
	Build self-confidence	Believe in yourself
	Develop intrinsic motivation	Seize the day
	Engage in cooperative learning	Love thy neighbour
	Use right-brain processes	Get the BIG picture
	Promote ambiguity tolerance	Cope with the chaos
	Practice intuition	Go with your hunches
	Process error feedback	Make mistakes work FOR you
0	Set personal goals	Set your own goals

These suggestions cum injunctions are able to sensitise learners to the importance of attaining autonomy, that is, taking charge of their own learning, and not expecting the teacher to deliver everything to them.

Communicative Language Teaching

The need for communication has been relentless, leading to the emergence of the Communicative Language Teaching. Having defined and redefined the construct of communicative competence; having explored the vast array of functions of language that learners are supposed to be able to accomplish; and having probed the nature of styles and nonverbal communication, teachers and researchers are now better equipped to teach (about) communication through actual communication, not merely theorising about it.

At this juncture, we should say that Communicative Language Teaching is not a method; it is an approach, which transcends the boundaries of concrete methods and, concomitantly, techniques. It is a theoretical position about the nature of language and language learning and teaching.

Let us see the basic premises of this approach:

- Focus on all of the components of communicative competence, not only grammatical or linguistic competence ?h Engaging learners in the pragmatic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes
- Viewing fluency and accuracy as complementary principles underpinning communicative techniques
- Using the language in unrehearsed contexts

The Reading Approach

This approach is selected for practical and academic reasons. For specific uses of the language in graduate or scientific studies. The approach is for people who do not travel abroad for whom reading is the one usable skill in a foreign language.

The priority in studying the target language is first, reading ability and second, current and/or historical knowledge of the country where the target language is spoken. Only the grammar necessary for reading comprehension and fluency is taught. Minimal attention is paid to pronunciation or gaining conversational skills in the target language. From the beginning, a great amount of reading is done in L2, both in and out of class. The vocabulary of the early reading passages and texts is strictly controlled for difficulty..

Conclusion

From all the above we can see that the manageable stockpile of research of just a few decades ago has given place to a systematic storehouse of information. Researchers the world over are meeting, talking, comparing notes, and arriving at some explanations that give the lie to past explanations. As Brown (2000: ix) notes, "Our research miscarriages are fewer as we have collectively learned how to conceive the right questions". Nothing is taken as gospel; nothing is thrown out of court without being put to the test. This "test" may always change its mechanics, but the fact remains that the changing winds and shifting sands of time and research are turning the desert into a longed-for oasis.

The study of modern languages did not become part of the curriculum of European schools until the 18th century. Based on the purely academic study of Latin, students of modern languages did much of the same exercises, studying grammatical rules and translating abstract sentences. Oral work was a minimum with focus on memorization of grammatical rules and possibly the ability to read in the target language.

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