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0. INTRODUCTION

This unit aims at providing a detailed account of the evolution of language from its origins, as an object of study, to a theory of language teaching. As Albert C. Baugh (1993) states, the basis for an understanding of present-day English and for an enlightened attitude towards questions affecting the language today is knowledge of its origins.

In order to do so, a brief history of language teaching up to the twentieth century will first be considered. Then the different theories of language and language learning that have served as the basis for the proliferation of different methods and approaches throughout the twentieth century will be analysed in depth. Next, in the light of these previous considerations the main methods and approaches that have influenced language teaching practice in the past and today will be considered. Special emphasis will be placed on the study of the communicative approaches. Finally, some considerations will be made on the new trends in language teaching nowadays.

The elaboration of this unit has been foregrounded on some of the most relevant and influential scholars in the field such as Richards and Rodgers Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (1992), Howatt, A History of English Language Teaching or David Nunan, Practical English Language Teaching (2003), Bill VanPatten, Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen(2003)

1. BRIEF HISTORY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING UP TO THE 20TH CENTURY

The study of language has always been of great importance from the very first stages of the human race. And of particular importance the study of different languages as means of establishing communication with people from different cultures.

Even the most ancient civilisations have studied languages. We know for example of the existence of interpreters and translators in Egypt or in Babylonia who were of the greatest importance in arriving at commercial pacts among the different people of Cyprus or Palestine, in fact there are more than 350 documents that prove the existence of a Bureau of Foreign Affairs in the Kingdom of Amenophonis III.

The Greeks as we can imagine were not too interested in learning other languages as there was nothing abroad worth reading. However, much later the wealthy Romans would be interested in learning Greek as means to be able to read first hand Plato and Aristotle. Nevertheless we can only guess that this learning was achieved by means of the grammar translation method together with some conversation. This transformed Rome into an almost Bilingual civilization.

Another step in the teaching of languages must be found with the spread of Christianity throughout and beyond the Roman Empire. The first Christian missionaries were forced to learn different languages trying to convert gentiles and pagans.

During the Middle Ages the only languages considered worth studying were Latin, Greek and Hebrew and this was done mainly at the Monasteries.

But perhaps the greatest milestone in the learning of languages regarding the modern western world was the discovery of America. It was in America, that “the direct method” was widely used for the first time. For instance, Christopher Columbus wrote in his diary that he was going to take six Indians to Spain
to teach them the language, and, what is more, that the Indians were going to learn separately, totally deprived from their mother tongue. Some conquerors also decided to follow the method and immersed themselves into the different Indian tribes to the point of becoming almost natives. This is the case for example of Francisco Del Puerto.

In the Renaissance we find that one of the requirements to enter Harvard University in 1636 was to possess a sound understanding of the Latin Classics.

Whereas today, English is the world’s most widely spoken and studied language, five hundred years ago, it was Latin for it was the dominant language of education, commerce, religion and government in the Western World. In the sixteenth century, however, Italian, French and English, gained importance as a result of political changes in Europe, and Latin gradually became displaced as the language of spoken and written communication. Nevertheless, Latin was still studied as a subject of the school curriculum. The Latin that was studied was literary Latin and this was done by means of thorough study of the grammar and translation. Conversation was not included as its purpose was to assimilate the prescriptive grammars and then proceed to read its literature. For instance, Children entering “grammar school” in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were initially given a rigorous introduction to Latin grammar,

There were some attempts to promote alternative approaches learning of language as we shall see later (Montaigne 16th Century, Comenius and Locke in the 17th Century) but the grammar translation method and tradition prevailed.

1.1. 18th & 19th CENTURY

The Grammar Translation Method

It wasn’t until the 18th Century that the study of modern languages was introduced in Universities. It was in 1779 that French replaced the study of Hebrew in the University of Harvard. From then on others would add and the interest in the study of modern languages steadily increased. However, these modern languages were very much taught and studied in the same way as the classics –Latin, Greek and Hebrew-. The so called Grammar Translation Method was applied to the teaching of these languages. The grammars of Latin and Greek were applied to the teaching of modern languages. Students had to master Latin grammar, as this was the terminology used to explain the modern languages grammar. Students for instance could understand why English had a nominative case (pronouns for example) until they had studied grammar. Textbooks consisted of statements about abstract grammar rules, lists of vocabulary, and sentences for translation. Speaking the foreign language was not the goal, and oral practice was limited to students reading aloud the sentences they had translated. These sentences were constructed to illustrate the grammar and consequently bore no relation to the language of real communication.

Grammar translation method dominated European and foreign languages teaching from the 1840s to 1940s. It is still used today in situations where the understanding of literary texts is the primary focus of foreign language study and there’s is little need for a speaking knowledge of the language. Although it is still widely used it has neither advocates nor linguistic, psychological or educational theory to support it.
1.2. 19th CENTURY INNOVATIONS

By the nineteenth century, this approach based on the study of Latin had become the standard way of studying foreign languages in schools as we have mentioned in the previous section but more and more several factors contributed to question and reject the Grammar Translation Method. Increased opportunities for communication among Europeans created a demand for oral proficiency in foreign languages. Initially this created a market for conversation books and phrase books intended for private study, but language teaching specialists also turned their attention to the way the public education system was failing to fulfill its responsibilities.

a. Pre-Reform Movement

In Germany, England, France, and other parts of Europe, new approaches to language teaching were developed by individual language teaching specialists, each with a specific, each with a specific method for reforming the teaching of modern languages. Some of these specialists, like C. Marcel, T. Pendergrast, and F. Gouin, did not manage to achieve any lasting impact, though their ideas are of historical interest.

C. Marcel Rational Method (1793-1896) referred to child language learning as a model for language teaching, he also emphasized the importance of meaning in learning and proposed that reading be taught before other skills. His theory is the most consistent and elaborate of the three pre-reformers, however his idea of teaching reading first was quite fashionable at a time were trends and movements were trying or going to try to emphasize the oral component.

T. Prendergast “Mastery System” (1806-1896) He is the only Englishman among the early nineteenth century reformers. He is one of the first to record the information that children use contextual and situational clues to interpret utterances and that they use memorized phrases and routines in speaking “they employ sentences in which will be found many words that they do not thoroughly understand” (Prendergast 1864: 8-9) He therefore concluded that the only explanation is that the must have learnt, retained and reproduced them by dint of imitation and reiteration. He affirmed that efficient foreign language teaching system would consist entirely of memorized sentences, practised to the point of instant recall. This would avoid the imperfection and hesitation of those sentences uttered inaccurately (those self generated sentences). His solution was surprisingly the same as that given by behaviourist-structuralist in the twentieth century. He proposed a structural syllabus advocating that learners should learn the most basic structural patterns occurring in language. However, the obvious question here is, which sentences are we going to select? As we can’t possibly teach and learn all the possibilities a language offers.

Francois Gouin and the “Series” (1831-1896). He is perhaps the best known of these mid-nineteenth century reformers. Gouin developed an approach to teaching a foreign language based on his observation of children’s use of language. The reason for being better known although his work is less scientific and accurate than his predecessors is that he published The Art of Teaching and Studying Languages, in Paris in 1880 on the eve of the Reform Movement, but it had actually been written much earlier and printed privately in Geneva where he owned a Language School. He believed that language learning was facilitated through using language to accomplish events consisting of a sequence of related
actions. The famous Gouin “Series” includes sentences related to such activities as chopping wood or opening the door.

I walk toward the door
I draw near to the door
I draw nearer to the door
Etc . . . . ,

He emphasizes the need to present new teaching items in a context that makes their meaning clear, and the use of gestures and actions to convey the meanings of utterances. These practices paradoxically became habitual practices of approaches and methods such as Situational Language Teaching or Total Physical Response.

Despite the originality and innovation of these proposals, they didn’t somehow have wide diffusion and acceptance at the time, perhaps because they “were developed outside the context of established circles of education and hence lacked the means for wider dissemination, acceptance and implementation” (Richards & Rogers: 1986, 6)

These attempts however show that necessity is the mother of invention, and that given a certain need there are always different ways to and attempts to fulfil them. This is the case of the pre-reformers. Their attempts didn’t enjoy a lasting effect at the time; however they did serve the purpose of granting the teaching of languages a different scope from that given by the obsolete Grammar Translation Method.

b. The Reform Movement

Marcel, Pendergast and Gouin among others had done much to promote alternative approaches to language teaching, but their ideas failed to receive widespread support or attention for the reasons previously mentioned. But from 1880s practically minded linguists like Henry Sweet in England, Wilhelm Viëtor in Germany and Paul Passy in France began to provide the intellectual leadership needed to give reformists ideas greater credibility and acceptance. The discipline of linguistics was revitalized. This was mainly due to the thorough study of Phonetics that gave new insights into speech processes. These linguists emphasized that speech, rather than the written word, was the primary form of language. The international Phonetic Association was founded in 1886, and its well known International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). One of the earliest goals of the association was to improve the teaching of modern languages. Henry Sweet in England published The Practical Study of Languages (1899) setting forth some principles for the development of the teaching method. Viëtor in Germany published a pamphlet Language Teaching Must Start Afresh (1882) where he strongly criticized the Grammar Translation Method and stressed the value of training teachers in the new science of phonetics. Speech patterns, he argued, rather than grammar, were the fundamental elements of language. In general the reformers believed that

1. The spoken language is primary and this should be reflected in the use of an oral based methodology in the teaching of languages.
2. The findings of phonetics should be applied to teaching and to teacher training
3. Learners should hear the language first, before seeing it in written form
4. Words should be presented in sentences and sentences practiced in meaningful contexts and not be taught as isolated and disconnected elements.

5. Grammar should be taught only after the students have practiced the grammar points in context – Grammar should therefore be taught inductively.

6. Translation should be avoided, although the mother tongue could be used in order to explain new words or check comprehension.

These principles and proposals did not assume the status of method although set the foundations for an approach to teaching languages based on the scientific study of language and language learning. They reflect the beginnings of what latter would be “Applied linguistics”

Parallel to the ideas put forward by members of the Reform Movement was an interest in developing principles for language teaching out of naturalistic principles of language learning, such as are seen in first language acquisition. This led to what have been termed natural methods and ultimately to the development of what came to be known as the Direct Method.

C. The Direct Methods From Montaigne to Berlitz

Gouin was one of the first nineteenth century reformers to attempt to build a methodology around observation of child language learning. Other reformers toward the end of the century also turned their attention to naturalistic principles of language learning. But others, such as Montaigne had long before attempted to make second language learning more like first language learning.

In the sixteenth century Montaigne described how he was entrusted to a guardian who addressed him exclusively in Latin for the first years of his life, since Montaigne’s father wanted his son to speak Latin well.

In the nineteenth century Sauveur (1826-1907) tried to apply naturalistic principles to language classes. He used intensive oral interaction in the target language, employing questions as way of presenting and eliciting language. His method soon became referred to as Natural Method.

Sauveur and other believers of the Natural Method argued that a foreign language could be taught without translation or the use of the learner’s mother tongue if meaning was conveyed directly through demonstration and action.

F. Franke, a German Scholar, wrote that a language could best be taught by using it actively in the classroom. Rather than using analytical procedures that focus on complicated explanations of grammar rules, teachers must encourage direct and spontaneous use of the foreign language in the classroom. Learner would then be able to infer grammar rules.

These natural language learning principles set the foundations for what came to be known as the Direct Method, which refers to the most widely known of the natural methods. Enthusiastic supporters of

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1 Branch of language study concerned with the scientific study of second and foreign language teaching and learning

2 http://www.berlitzidaho.com/id3.html
the Direct Method introduced it in France and in Germany\(^3\), and it became widely known in the United States through its use by Sauveur and Maximiliam Berlitz. In practice it stood for the following principles and procedures:

1. Exclusive use of the target language in class
2. Teachers usually began a language course with an introduction period during which students were taught the new sound system\(^4\)
3. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught
4. Oral communication skills were taught in a carefully graded progression and organized around question and answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes
5. Grammar was taught inductively
6. New teaching points were introduced orally
7. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures: abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas
8. Speech and listening preceded reading and writing
9. Even when reading the students were encouraged to forge a direct association between the printed word and their understanding of it.
10. When they read they read about things they have already discussed orally
11. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized but grammar is kept at a functional level as students are encouraged to form their own generalizations about grammatical structures by an inductive process reflecting on what they have been practicing and learning.

The Direct Method was quite successful in private schools, such as those as Bertliz but it was difficult to implement in public secondary schools as it failed to consider the realities of the average classroom. Among the critics that can be done to the Direct Method are:

1. **It lacked a rigorous basis in applied linguistics theory** (for this reason it was criticized by the more academically based proponents of the Reform Movement.
2. **It required teachers who were native speakers or who had native speaker’s fluency.** It was largely dependent on the teacher’s skill, rather than on a textbook, and not all teachers were proficient enough
3. **Teacher were obliged to go a great length to avoid using the mother tongue, when sometimes a simple brief explanation in the student’s native tongue would have a more efficient route** (Brown 1973:5)
4. **It is unrealistic to believe that the condition of native language learning can be recreated in the classroom with adolescent students.** Unlike infant learners, adolescent or adult students already possess well-established native language habits. (William M. Rivers 1968:34)

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\(^3\) It was officially approved in both countries at the turn of the century

\(^4\) Since the study of phonetics had developed during the second half of the nineteenth century, teacher were able to make use of its findings of the mechanics of sounds production (IPA) and adapt it to its monolingual classes.
5. Since students are required at all times to make a direct association between foreign phrase and situation, it is the highly intelligent students with well developed powers of induction who profit most from this method and on the contrary can become discouraging and bewildering for the less talented.

By the 1920s, use of the Direct Method in non-commercial schools in Europe had consequently declined. For instance in France and in Germany it was gradually modified into versions that combined some Direct Method teaching techniques with more controlled grammar based activities. In the United States for instance, the goal of trying to teach conversation skills was considered impractical in view of the restricted time available for foreign language teaching in schools, the limited skills of teachers and the perceived irrelevance of conversations skills in a foreign language for the average American college student. The emphasis on reading continued therefore to characterised foreign language teaching in the United States until World War II.

Although the Direct Method enjoyed much more popularity in Europe not everybody embraced it enthusiastically and soon some pointed out and noticed its limitations and drawbacks. Therefore in the 1920s and 1930s applied linguists systematised the principles proposed by the Reform Movement and so laid the foundations for what developed into the British approach to teaching English as a foreign language giving birth to Audiolingualism in the United States and the Oral Approach in Britain.

2. TWENTIETH CENTURY

Throughout the twentieth century many methods and approaches to the teaching of languages developed. These methods we shall later explain in detail were sometimes theoretically based on theories of language (structuralism, functional view, interactional view), in theories of language learning (behaviourism, cognitivism, mentalism) or in a combination of both. We will therefore briefly explain some of these theories that will in turn help us understand the philosophy underlying most of the twentieth century teaching methods.

2. 1. Theories of language

At least three different theoretical views of language and the nature of language explicitly or implicitly inform current approaches and methods in language teaching.

The first and the most traditional of the three is the structural view. Traditional grammars had the fundamental difficulty of making emphasis on the detail of language and a tendency to obscure the larger patterns. For structuralist language is a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning. Language is a series of unique structures that follow regular

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5 Noam Chomsky

6 In a more general sense structuralism is based on the belief that each language is a unique relational structure, and that the key to linguistic scholarship is not to study the elements in isolation but as parts of a systemic whole (Prague School). In a narrower sense, structuralism refers to the views and methodology of the dominant School of American Linguist (Bloomfield, in his book Language) that is worried with the form of language rather than with meaning. But in a more general sense many experts identify structuralist as those who emphasize the phonological and grammatical structure of language in contrast with the semantic.
patterns, patterns that are the basis of grammar. Its elements are usually defined in terms of phonological units (phonemes...) grammatical units (clauses, phrases, and sentences), grammatical operations (adding, shifting, joining, or transforming elements) and lexical items (function words and structure words). Grammatical categories should be defined not in terms of meaning but in terms of distribution, and that the structure of each language should be described without reference to the alleged universality of such categories as tense, mood and parts of speech... Structural grammar attempts to explain grammatical relationships solely in terms of the formal features observable within the language corpus. According to structuralists individual sounds, words, or part of sentences have no linguistic significance themselves; they have significance only as they contrast and combine with other items in the patterns of a linguistic system. Lexical meaning (what we commonly consider dictionary meaning) is not regarded as part of grammar for structuralist, being an area of study of its own. Socio-cultural meaning (the special significance which language elements acquire for people living in a particular culture) is also outside grammar. Structural meaning (which is conveyed by the relationships among the elements in the utterance) is therefore what remains and accounts for in the structuralist view. As a result, the function of one element in relation to other elements within of discourse has frequently been confused with the functioning of these elements in a contextual situation (that is, in the expression of an idea or message).

**Structuralist view** of language had a considerable influence on the preparing of materials for language teaching. The emphasis on structural rather than lexical or situational meaning was basic to the development of pattern or structural drill. Pattern practice and drilling was an essential to provide the student practice in certain structures. The target of language learning is the mastery of these elements so they compared the L1 and the L2 and saw what structures where similar and which caused interference in the learmers of a second language

The Audio Lingual Method, Total Physical Response and Silent Way, subscribe to this particular view of language.

The second view on the nature of language is the **functional view**. Under this perspective language is more than a set of structures. Meaning recovers its place in language. Language under this perspective is a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning. This perspective emphasizes the semantic and communicative dimension rather than merely the grammatical characteristics of language. The organization of contents is not done in structural terms but is based on meaning and functions.

Chomsky was among the first linguists to criticize and scrutinized structuralist's view of language. He argued that beneath that surface structure the structuralists were trying to describe and systematise was a deep or underlying structure. Chomsky's classical example was the juxtaposition of two sentences,

- John is eager to please
- John is easy to please

In the first sentence John does the pleasing and in the second someone else pleases John. Apparent similarity in surface forms of language ma camouflage important differences in meaning. Intensive drilling of indiscriminately selected surface features which appeared to represent the same pattern could lead to error when the student attempted to create new sentences by analogy with the forms practiced. From
them on, teachers and writers of materials started to pay more attention to meaning in the selection of content in order to ensure that the patterns were really analogous at a deep structure level. It is this deep structure level that was the object of Chomsky’s Transformational Generative Grammar, and the first step towards a different approach in the teaching of languages.

Halliday asked himself the question of “Why is language structured the way it is and not in some other way?” And his answer was: “Because it reflects the functions which language is required to serve as a means of social communication.” But he did not accept the deep structure/surface structure distinction. He argues that: It is not necessary to say that one particular function of language is more abstract than other, or “deeper” as Chomsky puts it. All are semantically relevant (Halliday 1970: 165). As we see Halliday approaches the description of language structure by asking himself what functions language is required to fulfil. He is therefore concerned with the manner in which language is used to convey meaning in communication. He is in other words, concerned with how the use of the different surface forms alters the prominence and meaning of the information (meaning) conveyed. And this perspective will enlarge the concept of language beyond the mere structures. In time these ideas will be developed and knowing a language will imply many more things than just knowing the rules of language (Grammar) but also other aspects such as its discursive, socio-cultural and strategic components, giving birth to the idea of communicative competence.

The Communicative Approach to the teaching of languages subscribes to this view of language.

The third view of language can be called the interactional view. It sees language as a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals. Language is seen as a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relations. Interactional theories focus on the patterns of moves, acts, negotiation, and interaction found in conversational exchanges. Language teaching content, according to this view, may be specified and organized by patterns of exchange and interaction or may be left unspecified by the inclinations of learners as interactors.

2.2. Theories of Language Learning

• Although specific theories on the nature of language as the ones explained above may provide the basis for a particular teaching method, other methods derive primarily from a theory of language learning. But also, quite often the linking of a language theory and a language learning theory will set the theoretical principles for a particular method or approach to the teaching of languages although that linking is neither always inevitable nor compulsory. For instance the linking of structuralism and behaviourism gave birth to the Audio Lingual Method. But some cognitivists as we will see later also attempted to link structuralism and cognitivism. Language learning theories try to give answer to two questions:
  o What are the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes involved in learning an language
  o What are the conditions that should be met for these learnings to take place?

Some methods based on language learning theories will put more emphasis on one or in the other. For example, Process oriented theories will build their method or approach on habit formation, induction, hypothesis testing etc, as means for learning to take place. On the other hand Condition oriented theories
will emphasize more the nature of the human and physical context as the reason for learning to take place. Some methods or approaches attach equal importance to both.

Krashen’s Monitor Model is an example of a Method based not only of a theory of language learning but also on the necessary conditions for learning to take place. On the other hand, Silent Way is an example of a method that basically states the conditions for learning to take place although doesn’t specify the learning processes themselves (imitation?, repetition? Induction? )

Behaviourism is perhaps one of the best known theories on language learning. It draws from the field of psychology and from the idea that all type of learning is achieved by means of repetition. Skinner and his “Verbal Behaviour” was among the first to postulate that language learning as any other type of learning took place by means of imitation and repetition. Not long before Pavlov’s experiment regarding the dog and the bell had tried to prove the importance of conditioning in learning.

This particular theory of learning and more specifically of language learning connected very well with the structuralist view of language as a set of related structures and gave birth to several methods and inspired others. However soon this theory became under scrutiny. It was Chomsky who firstly criticized Skinner’s Verbal Behaviour. He argued that if learning first language took place by means of repetition and imitation how was it possible that a child produced a sentence he had never heard before. He stated that Behaviourist view did not account for the creative aspect of language. The child did not learn by means of imitation or repetition. He believed that in innateness. This is humans have an innate capacity for learning languages provided the appropriate circumstances. He believed that human beings had what he called a Language Acquisition device7. This language acquisition device had a Universal Grammar which allowed children to test hypothesis and formulate infinite number of sentences they had not even heard before.

Although some aspects of Chomsky’s theory (that refereed to first language acquisition, not second) were later discussed and argued, it was a milestone for the teaching of languages as it introduced a very interesting argument for the learning of the second language. Language is rule governed. It is not learnt by means of repetition or imitation. But instead language is learnt by means of a series of cognitive processes. Important concepts for the learning of languages such as that of Interlanguage, hypothesis testing, or those referring to the treatment of errors are the result of Mentalism and Cognitivism8 and will influence many methods and approaches as we shall see.

2.3. Methods and theoretical framework

Within methodology a distinction is often made between methods and approaches, in which methods are held to be fixed teaching systems with prescribed techniques and practices, whereas approaches represent language teaching philosophies that can be interpreted and applied in a variety of different situations.

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7 LAD (language acquisition device is a unique theory elaborated by Chomsky) the acquisition of language according to Chomsky does is independent and differentiated from other types of learning. In this respect he didn’t agree with others such as Piaget, who after elaborating his theory of learning found no basis for Chomsky’s assertion.

8 Mentalist such as Chomsky believe that the learning of a language is a cognitive processes different and separate from other cognitive processes. Cognitivist on the other hand believe that the learning of a language is no different from other cognitive processes.
ways in the classroom. This distinction is probably most usefully seen as defining a continuum of entities ranging from highly prescribed methods to loosely described approaches.

The period from the **1950s to the 1980s** has often been referred to as "The Age of Methods," during which a number of quite detailed prescriptions for language teaching were proposed. **Situational Language Teaching** evolved in the United Kingdom while a parallel method, **Audiolinguism**, emerged in the United States. In the middle-methods period, a variety of methods were proclaimed as successors to the then prevailing Situational Language Teaching and Audio-Lingual methods.

These alternatives were promoted under such titles as Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response. These will later be known as the Humanistic Methods as they relied more on affective components for the achievement of communicative competence rather than on a particular theory of language or of language learning.

In the 1980s, these methods in turn came to be overshadowed by more interactive views of language teaching, which collectively came to be known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Communicative Language Teaching advocates subscribed to a broad set of principles such as these:

- **Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.**
- **Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.**
- **Fluency is an important dimension of communication.**
- **Communication involves the integration of different language skills.**
- **Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.**

However, CLT advocates avoided prescribing the set of practices through which these principles could best be realized, thus putting CLT clearly on the approach rather than the method end of the spectrum.

Communicative Language Teaching has spawned a number of off-shoots that share the same basic set of principles, but which spell out philosophical details or envision instructional practices in somewhat diverse ways. These CLT spin-off approaches include The Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, Content-Based Teaching, Task-Based Teaching etc.

### 2.3.1. Oral Approach and Situational Language teaching

This approach dates back to the 1920s and 1930s and develops a more scientific **foundation** for an **oral approach** than the one evidenced in the Direct Method. Its most prominent figures are the British applied linguists Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby, who developed the **basis** for a principled approach to methodology in language teaching. The terms Oral Approach or Situational Language Teaching are not commonly used today, but the impact of the Oral Approach has been long lasting, and it has shaped the design of many widely used textbooks and courses, including many still being used today.

Therefore it is important to understand the **principles** and practices of this oral approach which resulted from a systematic study of the lexical and grammatical content of a language course. This approach involved principles of selection, organization and presentation of the material based on applied
linguistic theory and practice. Thus, the **role of vocabulary** was seen as an essential component of reading proficiency, and parallel to this syllabus design was a focus on the **grammatical** content, viewed by Palmer as the underlying sentence patterns of the spoken language. This classification of English sentence patterns was incorporated into the first **dictionary** for students of English as a foreign language, and some grammatical **guides** which became a standard reference source for textbook writers.

The Oral Approach was the accepted British approach to English language teaching by the 1950s, but in the sixties, another active proposal from Australia and termed **situational**, entered this approach developing an influential set of teaching materials based on the notion of “situation”, linking structures to situations. Its main leader was George Pittman, and its main characteristics were as follows: material is taught orally before it is presented in written form; introduced and practiced situationally; and reading and writing are introduced only when sufficient lexical and grammatical basis is established. The skills are approached through structure.

The idea of new language points presented situationally became a key feature characterized as a type of British “structuralism”, in which speech was regarded as the basis of language, and structure was viewed as being at the heart of speaking ability. In the words of Richards & Roberts (1992), this theory that knowledge of structures must be linked to situations has been supported by British linguists, giving a prominent place to meaning, context, and situation. Prominent figures such as M.A.K. Halliday and Palmer emphasized the close relationship between the structure of language and the context and situations in which language is used.

**2.3.2. The Audiolingual Method**

The origins of this method trace back to the entry of the United States into World War II since the government aimed to teach foreign languages to avoid Americans becoming isolated from scientific advances in other countries. The National Defence Education Act (1958) provided funds for the study and analysis of modern languages based on the earlier experience of the army programs such as the so-called ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program). This program was established for military personnel in 1942 in American universities, and its main objective was for students to attain conversational proficiency in different foreign languages through significant drills.

This fact had a significant effect on language teaching in America, and in fact, new approaches on language teaching were soon developed, and toward the end of the 1950s a new approach emerged under the name of Audiolingualism (term coined by Professor Nelson Brooks in 1964. It is based in structural linguistics (structuralism) and behaviouristic psychology (Skinner’s behaviourism). Therefore, it is primarily an oral approach to language teaching and there is little provision for grammatical explanation or talking about the language.

The audio-lingual method aims at teaching the language skills in the order of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and is based on using drills for the formation of good language habits. Thus students are given a stimulus, which they respond to. If their response is correct, it is rewarded, so the habit will be formed; if it is incorrect, it is corrected, so that it will be suppressed. As Rivers (1981) states, material is
presented in spoken form, and the emphasis in the early years is on the language as it is spoken in everyday situations.

It was a methodological innovation which combined structural linguistic theory, contrastive analysis, aural-oral procedures, and behaviourist psychology. Therefore linguists such as Leonard Bloomfield developed training programs within an anthropological and linguistic tradition. The best known of these programs was the “informant method”, based on a strict timetable (ten hours a day during six days a week); fifteen hours drill with native speakers and almost thirty hours of private study over nearly three six-week sessions. Statistics show that excellent results were often achieved in small classes of mature and highly motivated students.

The theory of language underlying Audiolingualism was derived from a view proposed by American Linguist in the 1950s. that came to be known as structural linguistics. Structural linguistics was a reaction against traditional grammar. Language is viewed as a system of structurally related elements for encoding of meaning, As many languages do not have a written form, and we learn to speak before we learn to read or write it was argued that language is primarily spoken and only secondarily written. Therefore it was assumed that speech had priority over written forms. This was contrary to the popular versions of the time since it was widely assumed that language existed principally as symbols written on paper, and that spoken language was an imperfect realization of the pure written versions.

The theory of learning underlying the Audiolingual method was behaviourism. This is learning depends on a stimulus which serves to elicit behaviour; a response triggered by a stimulus and a reinforcement, which serves to mark the response as being appropriate (or inappropriate), and encourages repetition (or suppression) of the response in the future. These basic principles of behaviourist psychology were also applied to language. As Skinner said in Verbal Behaviour “we have no reason to assume that verbal behaviour differs from non verbal behaviour” (1957:10). It was therefore thought that:

1. Language is basically a process of mechanical habit formation
2. Language skills are learned more effectively if the items to be learned are presented in spoken form before they are seen in written form
3. Analogy provides better foundation for language learning than analysis. Analogy involves the process of generalization and discrimination. Explanation of rules is therefore not given until students have practiced a pattern in a variety of contexts and are thought to have acquired a perception of the analogies involved. Drills can enable learners to form correct analogies. Hence, the approach to the teaching of grammar is basically inductive.
4. The meanings of new words of a language have for the native speaker can be learned only in a linguistic and cultural context and not in isolation. Teaching English involves therefore teaching the cultural systems of the people who speak the language.(Rivers 1964: 19-22)

Both, in Audiolingualism and Situational Language Teaching, the teacher is the centre of the class, dialogues and drills for the basis of the activities and the materials are basically teacher oriented.
2.3.3. The cognitive code approach

At the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 70s, as a reaction against the defects of the audio-lingual method, and taking as its theoretical base the transformational and generative grammar of Chomsky, the so-called cognitive-code approach became popular. According to this approach, the learning of a language consists in acquiring a conscious control of its structures and its phonetic, lexical and grammatical elements, by means of, above all, the study and analysis of these structures, organised into coherent groups of knowledge. Once the student has reached a certain level of cognitive command of these elements, he will develop almost automatically the ability and capacity to use the language in realistic situations.

2.3.4. Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response is linked to several traditions, such as psychology, learning theory, and humanistic pedagogy. This method is built around the combination of speech and action and was developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology. For him, including movements within the linguistic production reduces learner stress, creating a positive mood which facilitates learning. This emphasis on comprehension and the use of physical actions to teach a foreign language is not new. In the nineteenth century, Gouin acknowledged a situationally based teaching strategy in which action verbs served as a basis for practicing new language items.

This method owes much to structuralist or grammar-based views of language as most of vocabulary items and grammatical structures are learned through an instructor. Asher still sees a stimulus-response view as reminiscences of the views of behavioural psychologists, directed to right-brain learning. The main goal is to teach oral proficiency at a beginning level through the use of action-based drills in the imperative form.

This method is updated with references to more recent psychological theories and supported by prominent theorists as Krashen because of its emphasis on the role of comprehension in second language acquisition. However, Asher himself, points out the need for this method to be used in association with other methods to be fully successful.

2.3.5. The Silent Way

Caleb Gattegno introduced this classroom technique wherein the teacher remains silent while pupils output the language through simulated experiences using tokens and picture charts as central elements. For instance, a colour-coded phonics (sound) chart called a fidel, with both vowel and consonant clusters on it, is projected onto a screen to be used simultaneously with a pointer, thus permitting the pupil to output continually the target language in a sequence of phonemes.

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10 [http://www.calebgattegno.co.uk/](http://www.calebgattegno.co.uk/)
Brightly coloured rods are integrated into this method for pupils to learn spatial relationships, prepositions, colours, gender and number concepts, and to create multiple artificial settings through their physical placement.

This method works effectively to promote small group discussion. Students are encouraged to produce as much language as possible and to self-correct their pronunciation errors through manual gesticulation on the part of the instructor. The greatest strength of this method lies in its ability to draw students out orally, while the teacher listens. These inner criteria allow learners to monitor and self-correct their own production. It is here where this method differs notably from other ways of language learning.

By looking at the material chosen and the sequence in which it is presented in the classroom it is clear that the silent way takes a structural approach to the organization of language. Language is seen as group of sounds arbitrarily associated with specific meanings and organized into sentences or strings of meaningful units by grammar rules. Language is separated from its social context and taught through artificial situations, usually represented by rods. He views language as a substitute for experience, so it is experience what gives meaning to language.

Like many other method proponents, Gattegno makes extensive use of his understanding of first language learning processes as a basis for deriving principles of language teaching although paradoxically he claims that the process of learning a foreign language is substantially different from that of learning the mother tongue. His artificial approach is based on the principle that successful learning involves commitment of the self to language acquisition and the use of silent awareness and then active trial.

The philosophy of this method could be summarized in the following maxim:

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve and I learn”

2.3.6. Community Language Learning

As the name indicates, this method follows a “humanistic” approach which was supported by Charles A. Curran, a specialist in counselling and a professor of psychology at Chicago University. His method is known as Counseling-Learning, and it redefines the roles of the teacher (counselor) and learners (the clients) in the language classroom.

He developed a holistic approach to language learning, since human learning is both cognitive and affective. For him, learning takes place in a communicative situation where teachers and learners are involved in an interaction. One of its main tenets is for the student to develop his relationship with the teacher.

This process is divided into five stages and compared to the ontogenetic development of the child. Thus, feelings of security are established; achievement of independence from the teacher; the learner
starts speaking independently; a sense of criticism is developed; and finally, the learner improves style and knowledge of linguistic appropriateness.

Curran wrote little about his theory which was to be developed by his student, La Forge. He built a theory on “basic sound and grammatical patterns” which started with criteria for sound features, the sentence, and abstract models of language in order to construct a basic grammar of the foreign language.

Since these humanistic techniques of counseling students engage the whole person, including the emotions and feelings (affective part) as well as linguistic knowledge and behavioural skills, this method has been linked to bilingual and adult education programs.

2.3.7. Suggestopedia

In the 1980s and 1990s, an extremely esoteric method was developed by a Bulgarian psychiatrist-educator called Georgi Lozanov. The most outstanding features of this mystical method are, according to Rivers (1981), its arcane terminology and neologisms, and secondly, the arrangement of the classroom to create an optimal atmosphere to learning, by means of decoration, furniture, the authoritative behaviour of the teacher and specially, through the use of music. Therapy theories are the reason of using music in the classroom as Lozanov calls upon in his use to relax learners as well as to structure, pace, and punctuate the presentation of linguistic material.

Lozanov acknowledges following a tradition on yoga and Soviet psychology, borrowing techniques for altering states of consciousness and concentration, and the use of rhythmic breathing. In fact, teachers are trained in a special way to read dialogues, using voice quality, intonation, and timing. Lozanov also claims that his method works equally well whether or not students spend time on outside study and promises success to the academically gifted and ungifted alike.

In the own words of Lozanov (1978), Suggestopedia prepares students for success by means of yoga, hypnosis, biofeedback or experimental science. Its main features such as scholarly citations, terminological jargon, and experimental data have received both support and criticisms. However, Suggestopedia is acknowledged to appear effective and harmonize with other successful techniques in language teaching methodology.

2.3.8. The Natural Approach

Karashen and Terrell identified the Natural Approach with what they called “traditional” approaches to language teaching, this is, use of language in communicative situations without the use of the native language” and without reference to grammatical analysis, grammatical drilling, or particular theory of grammar. The fact that the authors of this Natural Approach relate it to The Natural Method (previously explained) has led some to assume that the terms are synonymous. However, there are important

11 http://lozanov.hit.bg/dr_lozanov@yahoo.com
differences. Both the Natural Approach and the Natural Method (Direct Method) have in common an appeal to the naturalistic language learning in young children. However, it places less emphasis on teacher monologues, repetition or formal question answer procedure. On the Natural Approach there is an emphasis on exposure, or *input*, rather than practice, optimizing emotional preparedness for learning. There is also a prolonged period of attention to what the language learners hear before they try to produce language. Moreover, there is a willingness to use written input as a source of comprehensible input. There is therefore an emphasis on comprehensible input as well as on a silent period before production.

The **theory of language** underlying this approach is that of language as means of communication. This is they see comunication as the primary function of language. Both Terrell and Krashen refer to their approach as a communicative approach. However, one of the critics made upon this method is the fact that it actually lacks a theory of language. Language is seen as a vehicle of meaning and messages. Hence they state that “acquisition takes place only when people understand messages in the target language” (Krashen and Terrell 1983:19). Progress takes place when the input is just a little bit above the learners competence level or what they call L+1 level.

Their theory of language is not very elaborated nor explained in detailed, because their approach is fundamentally one based on a well structured theory of **second language learning acquisition**.

Their theory of second language acquisition is based on the following principles:

1. Acquisition learning hypothesis
2. The Monitor Hypothesis
3. The Natural Order Hypothesis
4. The Input Hypothesis
5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

### 2.3.8. Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative competence is a **linguistic** term for the ability to not only apply the grammatical rules of a language to form correct utterances, but to know when to use these utterances appropriately. The term was coined by Dell Hymes in 1966, reacting against the inadequacy of Noam Chomsky’s distinction between *competence and performance*.

According to a 1980 paper by Canale and Swain which has become canonical in applied linguistics, communicative competence consists of four components:

1. **grammatical competence**: words and rules
2. **sociolinguistic competence**: appropriateness
3. **sociocultural competence**: cultural appropriateness
4. **discourse competence**: cohesion and coherence
5. **strategic competence**: appropriate use of communication strategies
Through the influence of communicative language teaching, it has become widely accepted that communicative competence should be the goal of language education. This is in contrast to previous views in which grammatical competence was commonly given top priority. The understanding of communicative competence has been influenced by the field of pragmatics and the philosophy of language concerning speech acts as described in large part by John Searle and J.L. Austin.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language.

Historically, CLT can be seen as a response to the Audio-Lingual Method (the ALM) and as an extension or development of the Notional-Functional Syllabus.

A Notional-functional syllabus is more a way of organizing a language learning curriculum than a method or an approach to teaching. In a notional-functional syllabus, instruction is organized not in terms of grammatical structure as had often been done with the ALM, but in terms of notions and functions. In this model, a notion is a particular context in which people communicate, and a function is a specific purpose for a speaker in a given context. As an example, the notion or context shopping requires numerous language functions including asking about prices or features of a product and bargaining. Similarly, the notion party would require numerous functions like introductions and greetings and discussing interests and hobbies. Proponents of the notional-functional syllabus claimed that it addressed the deficiencies they found in the ALM by helping students develop their ability to effectively communicate in a variety of real-life contexts.

This notional-functional syllabus lacked established the objectives and contents should be taught in order to achieve communicative competence. However, it did not establish the how. As a result, many were the teachers and syllabuses that kept on using the old drills and techniques from Structuralist and behaviourist methods such as Audiolingualism and Situational Language Teaching. As a result, the emerged the communicative language approach, as a set of principles and techniques that would foster a this new organization built around the idea of meaning and communication.

The theory of language underlying CLT will be that of language as communication. Language is seen as a vehicle for the transmission of functional meaning and thus, as a vehicle for the realization of communicative competence. Little is known about the learning theory of “The Communicative Approach”. Activities that involve real communication promote learning. Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process.

As an extension of the notional-functional syllabus, CLT also places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts and places great emphasis on learning language functions. Unlike the ALM, its primary focus is on helping learners create meaning rather than helping them develop perfectly grammatical structures or acquire native-like pronunciation. This means that successfully learning a foreign language is assessed in terms of how well learners have developed their communicative competence, which can loosely be defined as their ability to apply knowledge of both formal and sociolinguistic aspects of a language with adequate proficiency to communicate.
• CLT is usually characterized as a broad approach to teaching, rather than as a teaching method with a clearly defined set of classroom practices. As such, it is most often defined as a list of general principles or features. One of the most recognized of these lists is David Nunan’s (1991) five features of CLT:
  o An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
  o The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
  o The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself.
  o An enhancement of the learner’s own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
  o An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

These five features show that practitioners of CLT are very interested in the needs and desires of their learners as well as the connection between the language as it is taught in their class and as it used outside the classroom. Under this broad umbrella definition, any teaching practice that helps students develop their communicative competence in an authentic context is deemed an acceptable and beneficial form of instruction. Thus, in the classroom CLT often takes the form of pair and group work requiring negotiation and cooperation between learners, fluency-based activities that encourage learners to develop their confidence, role-plays in which students practice and develop language functions, as well as judicious use of grammar and pronunciation focused activities.

The range of exercise types and activities compatible with a communicative approach is unlimited. Communicative activities in general should:
  • Engage students in communication
  • Require the use of communication process
  • Enable learners to attain the communicative objectives of the curriculum

Jeremy Harmer, has defined a set of characteristics that communicative activities share
  • A desire to communicate
  • A communicative purpose
  • Meaning vs Form
  • Variety of Language
  • No teacher intervention
  • No materials control

Basically, the techniques used in general communicative approaches to stimulate acquisition in the classroom are based on information gap and problem solving activities. It has been found that **two-
way-tasks”, in which two participants must share information in order to complete a task or solve a problem, are reflective in stimulating the development of communication skills. In particular, such activities provide an environment for the development of fluency and the negotiation of meaning so important for acquisition to take place. They stimulate learners to mobilise all their linguistic resources and push their linguistic knowledge to the limit. Learners also seem to be prompted to mobilise all their linguistic resources when teachers increase the number of referential rather than display questions they ask. (Referential questions are those to which the teacher does not have the answer).

A task-oriented communicative curriculum will develop a methodology which takes the learner towards the classroom rehearsal of tasks and skills needed for communicating outside the classroom.

Various task types have been developed to stimulate genuine whole-task practice in the classroom. These include information-gap tasks, language games, simulations and so on. One activity which can be used to simulate the type of communication tasks which learners will be required to perform in the real world is role play.

Richards suggests that collaboration activities such as group work, problem solving tasks, role plays and simulations exhibit the following characteristics:

• They provide opportunities to practise strategies for opening, developing, and terminating conversational encounters.
• They require learner to develop meaning collaboratively.
• They necessitate the use of turn-taking rules. They practise use of conversational routines and expressions.
• They involve learners in different kinds of roles necessitating use of different styles of speaking.
• They require negotiated completion of tasks. They involve information sharing.
• They focus on comprehensible and meaningful input and output. They require a high degree of learner participation.

By selecting topics and setting from the information obtained from learners through needs analysis, the classroom role plays can be made relevant to the perceived needs of the learners.

4. LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The age of methods has heavily influenced contemporary teaching practices. A lot has been learnt on how language learners acquire language and on how to enhance the teaching learning process. It seems clear today that any type of effective language learning should include communication and communicative competence as its main axis. Any teaching methodology should therefore bear this in mind. However, other aspects such as learners affective filter or strategy awareness in order to develop learner’s autonomy have also become central to common language teaching practice. In addition, the role of new technologies, software, internet etc, has become an important and useful for teachers and learners. The role of the teacher as great helper, helping students reach were they cannot reach on their own, and of the learner as an active participant responsible for his own learning process, seem key issues for any methodological approach worthwhile considering. It seems obvious therefore that most teaching strategies and methodologies nowadays tend to emphasize, students autonomy and motivation. Teaching students to communicate effectively will therefore necessarily involve giving them
the necessary learning and communicative strategies to do so as well as relating to their needs and interest so that they become involved in actively in their own learning process. These widely accepted premises have been the reason for the widespread of new technologies in the use of languages and of language content based programmes, where students needs and interest for learning the language are situated at the core of the teaching learning process.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY


