

**A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
ON
LANGUAGE
AND
LANGUAGE TEACHING LEADING
UP TO
THE ORAL APPROACH**

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INTRODUCTION

Foreign language learning has always been practiced in a variety of situations, for a variety of purposes, with a variety of underlying principles and with many different methods. The Oral Approach to language learning is the most modern of methods, and claims that the techniques it suggests are based on certain methods, which in their turn arises out of clear and fixed assumptions on what language and language learning is.

The work presented here is to give a picture of this approach in the light of a historical setting.

Using already generally accepted terminology, the thesis has been divided into three main parts. The first deals with Traditional Grammar and methods, the underlying principles together with the failures and criticisms as new insights began to develop. The same approach is used when dealing with the Direct Methods. The third part concentrates on the Oral Approach, and to give a picture of its basic assumptions together with the methods and techniques it suggests.

A conclusion very tentatively reports on what may be hoped for or expected in the future. As among many present-day language teachers there is still some misunderstanding and diffidence towards the most modern approaches, which cause them to be ever tempted to fall back on older methods, the author hopes that her work might in some better way help her colleagues to form a clearer understanding of what they are doing and to get a greater love, feeling of responsibility and pride in the task given to them of furthering communication and understanding among peoples.

CHAPTER I

TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR AND TRADITIONAL METHODS OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

I. Traditional Grammar.

In this first chapter we propose to give an analysis and description of the Traditional Methods of language teaching and learning, based particularly on the views of Traditional Grammar. For the approach towards this latter will certainly be connected with, and influence the former. A historical insight will further give a better understanding of the methods and the principles of Traditional Grammar.

Historically, we have to go back to the Renaissance, before which time Latin was very much a living language in Europe, other languages hardly being known or developed, and, if used, only then by the uneducated classes. If Latin was taught in schools — meaning that Latin grammar was taught, both because of its use, and because of the intellectual discipline involved — then Latin held a predominant position and was thought to be the best exponent of the Universal Grammar. With the use of new languages man became interested in these too, but always through the eyes of Latin scholars. New languages were therefore analyzed in terms of Latin and valued also on the same terms. Latin was a norm; so that in English for instance, one sought the distinction and devices of Latin grammar. The consequences of this revolution in language analysis will be discussed later in this paper.

Language therefore was first considered as the classical languages, and grammar that of these languages. The term Universal Grammar was used on the hypotheses of the deep connection between language and thought, that is of the expression and the thought categories, in which all human think and analyze the one reality. These thought categories were first given by the philosopher Aristoteles and handed down through history. It is interesting to note however that when speaking of language and of its elements, the first analysis was built not on meaning but on the forms of these classical languages. If later we will return to the question of meaning and form in language analysis, suffice to say here that the word "tradition" goes back to earlier philosophies and language analyses.

Language learning therefore in the "Grammar School" of old times would have had a double objective: that of learning a language

still actively used, and that of practising a mental discipline towards the formation and perfection of the human person. For this latter reason the learning of classical languages still has its great educational value up to the present day. It is a humanistic study, and, as such, gives an answer to the particular questions it raises.

From this view of language, in which grammar played the greatest role, certain conclusions might be drawn in connection with grammar and with language learning.

All languages were analyzed on the basis of Latin Grammar, and these not, as we have just said, on the basis of how this language itself originally was analyzed but on the categories found therein. We therefore arrive at the anomaly that such a language as English for instance was forced into a Latin form, which, as we shall see, was unnatural, and which gave rise to value judgements of the language. We do not know whether this traditional analysis of English helped the student learn his own language better, because of the humanistic value of grammar study and because of the actual analysis. Considering, however, the great similarities between Latin and the other Indo-European languages, we can imagine that this analysis together with the learning that followed such an analysis and such an approach to language, might have been successful.

II. Traditional Methods.

The emphasis in learning grammar and language was therefore based on the idea of correctness, which we understand here to imply not the correct use of language, its sounds, structures and vocabulary so as to be acceptable, but the correctness of objectivity between reality and the way this reality ought to be conceived and expressed in the human mind. We can imagine therefore that the English grammar classes conducted for those who used this language as natives was meant to teach correct and logical use. The classes were primarily normative and prescriptive. The rules of language were given first as the most logical expression of reality; then they had to be applied, correct form had to be given and errors eliminated. Language learning was therefore primarily a mental and intellectual discipline.

The norm of correctness was not only that arising out of the Universal Grammar, but also the language that was found in the great literary works, i.e. those works which, because of form and content (implying their cultural value), were considered to represent the highlights of language usage. If literary moreover was considered as the ability to read and write, these norms of language usage were found in written works. The written language held the primary above the spoken language when value judgements were to

be made. Grammars and dictionaries therefore were based on what one found in literature; moreover language classes were conducted on the learning of reading and writing as being the basic skills. The oral skills of language were neglected. Applied later to foreign language learning, all this meant that no emphasis was put on the oral skills, and pronunciation and intonation problems were given a last place, if any, in language grammars. Furthermore emphasis was based on literature, the history of the latter together with the historical cultural views that these implied. By being encouraged to use dictionaries, which reported by way of examples from literature how certain words were used and what through semantic studies were the original and pure meanings of the words, the language student was meant to appreciate and if possible reproduce language as found in its more original forms.

From these considerations we might now turn to all the implications therewith involved in learning a second or foreign language. At this point in our argumentation we will not consider further a distinction which we feel ought to be made between these two terms, which are commonly used interchangeably. As these terms and the possible distinction of these two are of later date, we can leave them aside in this chapter on traditional learning.

We might first realize the possible uses to which a foreign language might be put on an age when communication between peoples of different language groups and cultures differed so much from the present and from the trends of unity, understanding and cooperation that we find herein. The motivation for learning speech as a tool for active daily communication was hardly present. The motivation of learning foreign languages by those outside of the group that was considered educated and ~~well~~ versed in the classical languages, was likewise absent. These latter therefore were encouraged to study language as a mental discipline.

"If classical studies were intended and made to produce an excellent mental discipline, a fortitude of spirit and a broad humane understanding of life, then, when a modern foreign language was placed on the school curriculum it was considered natural, right and proper that it should be taught for the same objectives and according to the same patterned lines." (25, p.8)

These objectives were to be realized in the peculiar way in which the analysis of sentences was conducted, in the prominent place given to translation and in the emphasis given to literature.

As the problem of traditional language analysis, to be well understood, will depend on the contrast with modern methods of analysis, in short as the problem is one of the use of meaning and

form in language, we refer the reader to a later chapter where a contrastive description would be better in its place. We mention here only the adagium "more was learned about language than the language itself". Classes were conducted by giving grammar in the form of language rules and paradigms, which, rather than the use of which, were to be learned. Language use, if any, was in the form of "mental gymnastics": the laborious application of these rules and paradigms in written work, with the emphasis on the correctness, as this too, in its term was found in the written language .

Translation was therefore a major element in the foreign language learning curriculum. An extract, chiefly of some literary value, in one language was given to be put over into the other languages in a written form. Some fundamental assumptions implied in this discipline might be mentioned. Proceeding from the accepted idea of a Universal Grammar with its implications as to the manner of sentence analysis mentioned above, the major emphasis was put on the lexical items, which were considered to be the chief, if not the only, problems. One had primarily to find the equivalents of words by the consultation of bilingual dictionaries, and to apply these according to the grammatical rules given. The assumption of this approach, as of that of learning long word-lists, lists of words with their translation, was that when once reality had been transferred into one set of symbols, one had only to find the equivalents of these symbols in another language to come to a new and acceptable expression of that same reality. In this way a compound system was set up "in which some features of the new language are learned, yet for the most part, and especially with respect to the internalized processes, the mother tongue is not relinquished, but continues to accompany — and of course to dominate — the whole complex fabric of language behavior." (4, p.49) This was in contrast to a coordinate system of two languages in which not only the overt patterns of behavior that characterise the new language, but also the mental process that accompanies it, shall have equal status with the mother tongue, yet be entirely separate from it.

The prime value of translation was seen to lie in the mental discipline involved, as well as in the contact it gave with the literature of the language. It was the value of literature in language learning that was heavily emphasized. Literature was then given on a historical basis; one even made use of ready-made translations.

Contact to the language was therefore with the written form of the language, to the depreciation of speech. Usage and correctness lay and was normalised in the written form; speech, so well as various dialects different from what one called the standard form, had to accommodate themselves to the written language.

Summarizing our chapter therefore we might say that traditional methods of language learning were based on historical perspectives. Foreign languages were analyzed in the mode along that which once Latin had been analyzed; foreign languages were learned for the same humanistic aims as classical languages were learned; foreign languages were learned on what was considered the best exponents of these: historical works of literature comprising the culture of the people.

"At the end of the nineteenth century, language learning had become grammar recitation and dictionary thumbing. The students defined the parts of speech; memorised conjugations, declensions and grammar rules; and translated sections, using a bilingual dictionary or glossary." (21, p. 4)

CHAPTER II

THE FAILURES OF THE TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR AND TRADITIONAL METHODS OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

If our previous chapter was an attempt to describe what Traditional Grammar and Traditional Language Learning methods were, the purpose of this chapter is to show what criticisms arose to pave the way for new ideas on language and on language learning.

Bloomfield in 1933 wrote:

"The large part of the work of High Schools and Colleges that has been devoted to foreign language study, includes an appalling waste of effort: not one pupil in a hundred learns to speak and to understand, or even to read a foreign language. The mere disciplinary or "transfer" value of learning the arbitrary glosses of a foreign language can be safely estimated at almost nil. The realization of all this has led to much dispute, particularly as to the methods of foreign language teaching." (3, p.503)

"The pupil who takes up his first foreign language at High School age or later, is likely to substitute analysis for mere repetition, and thus to meet half way the incompetent teacher who talks about the language instead of using it. Between the two, they have kept alive the eighteenth century scheme of pseudo grammatical doctrine and puzzle-solving translation." (3, p.505)

Without discussing the value of classical and humanistic studies, under which language learning of a certain kind might be placed, we find in these extract of Bloomfield various criticisms aimed at the Traditional Method. They will be the stepping stones to the points of this chapter.

"With greater interests in modern languages for communication the inadequacy of Traditional Grammar Methods became evident. Students who devoted years to the study of a foreign language were in most cases unable to use it. They developed a distaste for the language and an inferiority complex about language learning in general." (21, p.4)

I. Historical Viewpoint.

From a historical viewpoint, we can understand the feeling of uneasiness.

"It may have been the first world war, when Americans in large numbers were put in contact with Europeans for the first time, which really focussed attention on the sad state of foreign language teaching in America. In any case it became recognised in the 1920's that the deadening pattern of language instruction, both in the classical and in the modern languages, needed a thorough overhauling." (5, p.171)

Various studies, investigations, reports and recommendations then arose. To illustrate the climate of thought we might mention the Classical Investigation (1924-1925), which emphasises the reading knowledge objective but not recommending a direct or oral method because of the lack of competent teachers; and secondly the Cole-

man Report (1929), which emphasized the same objective, leaving the oral mastery as an "ultimate" objective.

II. Why They Failed.

If one felt that languages were not being learned as desired in a world that was breaking open, and if one also showed more interest in actual pedagogical situations, in particular the competence and role of the language teacher, the criticisms of Bloomfield fall primarily under three heads: pseudo grammatical doctrine, and puzzle-solving translation; no learning, not even of reading.

The "pseudo grammatical doctrine" was that

"grammar is often considered as a crystallization of human logic, a set of concepts and distinctions in terms of which all languages should be described, a set of formal characteristics and correspondences to which all languages should perform. In the view.....the most convenient expression of grammar is one based on Latin." (3, p.304-305)

Nineteenth century developments in language study brought drastic reversion of orthodox concepts.

As Latin became a "dead" language and modern languages, European and others, developed to become the carriers of culture too, one left the idea of a perfect Universal Grammar, which expressed a value statement on other languages in so far as they fitted or did not fit in this one mold. With the discovery of Panini's work a revolution in the technique of language analysis took place; languages, and particularly grammar, were now to be analyzed on their own terms. Each language was a certain system, as we shall see later, of forms, and a system which was unique.

"There is no such thing as 'Universal Grammar', or at least if there is, it is so general and abstract as to be of little use." (8, p.114)

"Each language or dialect has its own unique system of behavior patterns. Part of this system may show similarities to parts of the system of other languages, particularly if those languages are genetically related. But different languages solve the problems of expression and communication in different ways." (8, p.114)

"Each language should be analyzed in terms of its own grammatical structure and not in terms of Latin or Greek or of any fancied 'Universal Grammar' based on European Semantic categories." (26, p.89)

"..... it was worse than useless to try to force every language into the Latin mold." (31, p.4)

"..... and the principle was established that every language must be described as it is, not as if it were Latin, and not as some grammarians might think it ought to be." (31, p.4)

Nelson Francis makes a clear distinction when he speaks of the various ways in which the word "grammar" can be used. The word "grammar" in what he calls "Grammar 1" is "the set of formal patterns in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey larger meanings." (8, p.113) He calls the second meaning of "grammar", "Grammar 2", as "the branch of linguistic science which is concerned with the description, analysis, and formulation of formal language patterns." (8, p.113) And the third meaning of "grammar" which he calls "Grammar 3" is "linguistic etiquette." (8, p.113)

If the old grammar doctrine saw grammar as etiquette, norms based on thought or history, the new grammar involved in the first place the science concerned with the description, analysis and formulation of formal language patterns, and secondly with "the set of formal patterns in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey larger meanings." (8, p.113) This one science results in the necessarily different analysis of different languages, in different sets of formal patterns. This science too says that "the analysis and description of a given language must conform to the requirements laid down for any satisfactory scientific theory. These are 1) simplicity, 2) consistency, 3) completeness and 4) usefulness for predicting the behavior of phenomena not brought under immediate observation when the theory was formed. Linguistic scientists have found that, judged by these criteria, the Traditional Grammar of English is unsatisfactory. It falls down badly on the first two requirements, being unduly complex and glaringly inconsistent within itself." (8, p.115)

To give a simple concrete example of this inconsistency which has crept into the description of English, we have, for instance, the parts of speech. Nouns and verbs are defined on a meaning basis: a noun is "the name of a person, place or thing," a verb is "a word that expresses action, being or condition." (31, p.60) A pronoun however, is "a word that takes the place of a noun," a definition based on function; so too an adjective, "a word which modifies a noun." (31, p.60)

The new approach says on the other hand that ".....it is precisely through the form of our words and sentences that we communicate our meanings." On formal grounds we would know of the jabberworky sentence "He blurped smitchly," that blurped is a class II word (verb) and smitchly a class IV word. (adverb) (31, p.62)

The association of meaning to form is arbitrary, and there-

fore a poor starting point for the examination of an unknown language. Moreover with a semantic basis one tends to impose the most familiar content structure we know on the language to be described. We saw how English was forced into a Latin or Greek mold.

III. New Objectives in Teaching based on New Realizations of what Language is.

The realization of what language is was the deepest background of these fundamental changes. The definition that is perhaps most satisfactory states that "Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which the members of a certain speech group communicate." (19, p.9) If language therefore is a system, this system must then be found according^{to} the principles of science as mentioned above. The old doctrine held that reality and thought on reality is a system, necessarily expressed in a single way by each language usage. The English system however found the Latin model inconsistent and unsystematic. On this basis therefore the system of English that has been given cannot satisfy the intellectual end of language learning. The new, unique and consistent system of each language would have to be understood in order to achieve this end.

The idea of arbitrariness is closely linked with this. Under this term we not only mean that each language has got its own lexicon, the value of whose items, even if perhaps taken over from Latin, will be determined by the lexical system of the new language, but also that each language has got its own approach to content. For grammar therefore there can be no a priori universality. The weaknesses therefore of the Traditional Grammar was that it was normative and deductive, and that it suggested mistakenly that usages not amendable to its rules were ungrammatical in some fashion.

If formerly the grammar of a language was based on the written language and in particular on examples found on an arbitrary basis to be^{good} in literature, new views on language realized the primacy of speech. It was the oral language that first had to be taught; it was this language too that was the material for language analysis.

"..... the only true form of a language is its spoken form of which the written language is a reflection." (1, p.21)

And so,

"The earlier view was not a beneficial influence on the learning of modern languages. No advance in the technique of teaching pronunciation could be made while it was held, and students often found that they could neither understand, nor be understood by native speakers of the lan-

guage they were learning." (1, p.21)

From the principles of the arbitrariness and of the primacy of the oral language, the symbols therefore of language are representative not of other symbols but of the particular language's view of content or reality. The symbols of one language cannot therefore be the representatives of the symbols of another language, as the oral symbols of a certain language too are not those of its written form. The oral symbols are therefore the expression side of reality. Based on this insight, translation, it was soon realized, was unfit as method for the learning of a language.

"..... a foreign language can be understood only by transposing it into one's mother tongue". (20, p.48)

It was based on the assumption that the expression system of one language held for all languages, and that therefore one could go from one expression system to another. This was the weakness of the build up of a compound system, which we saw, the traditional methods adored.

The final term of our definition of language around which we have centered our criticism is the word communication. This term suggests the use to which language is first put, and the method therefore of teaching it.

If language is for the purpose of communication, it is the language that is used for communication which must be the basis of analysis and of grammar. The new insights into language proved that a language was in a constant drift throughout its history, and so criticised the older notion which only saw the stability of language and its so called purity. Language that was effective for its communication purposes had to be the language actually used, language in its particular present historical position. It was this that had to be taught and learnt, the norm of good language was its communication effectiveness.

The value judgements of the older approach had to be corrected: effective language was that language or dialect that served its contemporary purposes best. The idea that one language was either more logical, complete, beautiful or useful than another language could no longer be validly defended. To illustrate one point in connection too with what we have said of the written language above, we find that Nelson Francis makes an interesting remark when he says that even the written representation of a language is a dialect of that language.

"Writing is a dialect of the spoken form. Emphasis should be on the spoken language since language is speech." (8, p.118)

IV. New Teaching Methods.

Teaching methods were to be radically altered if we emphasize the primary purpose of language use, that is communication.

Learning paradigms, declensions etc., as the Traditional Grammar advocated meant the learning of words on a series as they would never occur in communication. Paradigms have "no connection with each other or with anything else in the world, and only half of these words occur occasionally and some never at all in what he reads." (20, p.110) It is similarly unnatural to set up a book dealing deeply with different parts of speech before coming say to sentences, as all language communication from the very first occurs in sentences where different parts of speech are necessarily found.

Secondly, learning about the language in the form of rules to be applied did not mean the learning of being able to use the language. Sledd says that one "..... learned little or nothing about the sound patterns of their own speech, the way their words were formed or the selection and ordering of their words in phrases and sentences." (31, p.7) And Robert Lado says:

"The ability to talk about the grammar of a language, to recite its rules, is also very different from the ability to speak and understand a language or to read and write it. Often those who can use a language are unable to recite its rules and those who can recite its rules may be unable to use it." (21, p.4)

The rules, if they had to be learned, would have to be got inductively out of the lesson that had been learned. By induction it was stressed that these rules were dependent on the actual use of language in communication at a certain state of the language drift, and not pre-existent before actual usage.

Thirdly, all language learning would have to start off from the acknowledgement of the primacy of speech, as speech is the basis of all communication. Here we might criticize what Abercrombie says:

"It may be true that the spoken language plays quantitatively the more important part in the everyday life of the majority of us; it is not therefore qualitatively more important." (1, p.22)

We however hold that even qualitatively speech is more important; speech is primary; written language is but a representation thereof.

This being so the place and method of teaching reading would have to be reconsidered. As Moulton says:

".....; teaching him to read it was a totally different

and quite separate problem and it taken up at some later stage in the language learning process — if, indeed, there was time for it at all." (26, p.86)

Jespersen says too that the choice of words taught must be dependent on what is needed in communication. The traditional methods taught:

"..... words belonging to poetical style, which are bundled together with everyday words." (20, pp.19-20)

The Direct Methodists say:

"..... nothing to do with the vocabulary of poetry (elaborated prose), they burden the memory." (20, pp.19-20)

Words moreover have to be taught in context. If the old method was item or word centered and advocated the learning of word lists together with their translation in the mother tongue, the communication situation of language demands that words be learned in their actual use, in the context namely of the situations in which they can be used, as well as in the context with other words. The meanings of an actual utterance is dependent not on the sum of a certain number of items placed one after the other, but on the structural relations too of these different items, "a language is not made up of isolated words, but of word groups, of 'speech patterns', of sentences that mean something". (25, p.14) While moreover the actual meaning of a certain lexical item used is dependent on context too. It is this context that we might say which gives the "connotation" of the word used. Translation therefore cannot be a valid method of teaching language.

"..... almost word for word translation into the foreign language and from the foreign language into the mother tongue." (7, p.vi)

Psychologically, the traditional grammar method of language teaching might be criticized too. Language is a habit, unconsciously engaged in by its users. Language learning must therefore be based on habit formation and on unconscious use of the expression system while one concentrates on what he wants to say. Traditional methods with its "puzzle solving" techniques overstressed the conscious choice of language use, and paid no attention of any kind of exercises that encouraged habit formation.

Summarizing we say that the traditional method was inadequate, both because of the new objectives of language learning, as of the realization that even for its own humanistic purposes traditional grammar failed. It failed because of the "pseudo grammatical doctrine" at its base, it failed because of its neglect of speech as language's most complete expression.

The next chapter on the Direct Method will give a picture of how these failings were met.

CHAPTER III THE DIRECT METHOD

To pinpoint the date of the beginning of the Direct Method is an impossible task. We have mentioned the first world war as the occasion which awakened interest in America. Prior to this, the Direct Method was considered and developed in Europe. (21, p.5) Jespersen, one well-known representative of the Direct Method movement, published his book "How to Teach a Foreign Language" in 1904.

A survey of the historical background, the first part of this chapter, will show how and where a new method was coming into existence; it will be followed by a more systematic analysis and description of this method.

I. Historical Background.

In the following pages we propose to give a short run down of Mallinson's first chapter "Historical Perspective," emphasizing particularly the different ideas, terminologies, approaches, methods and techniques that are to be found.

Michel de Montaigne (sixteenth century) says that the best way to educate a nobleman of his day is "le commerce des hommes", to learn without book, grammar, beating and tears. That is via the Natural Method. (25, p.2) The principles of direct association between word and object and that of presenting grammar inductively, that is from sentences at first easy and gradually becoming more complicated, was given by John Amos Comenius (seventeenth century). The latter furthermore advocated the introduction of pictures in teaching, on the principle that one first has to see concrete things before ever being able to understand for instance abstract rules of grammar, and emphasized practice, imitation, repeating, copying and reading. Locke (seventeenth century) says that "languages were not made by Rules or Art, but by Accident, and the Common Use of the People If grammar ought to be taught at any time, it must be to one that can speak the language already;" (25, pp.5-6) In the eighteenth century, Johann Bernhard Basedow emphasized the fact that education should be according to Nature, practical in content and playful in method. Furthermore that reading should come after speaking, and the grammar should not be introduced until later in the course. These new ideas however were not put into practice in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: textbooks emphasized an absolute minimum of oral work and based teaching on a disciplined mastery of grammar and

syntax. The next push was given by Francois Gouin (nineteenth century), who brought in intense activity and dramatization of sentences he gave to be drilled. His method was psychological, being based on the association of ideas, on mental imagery — a kind of vague interior awareness — and on exploiting centres of interest. We might criticize his intense use of translation and his mingling of pronunciation drill, with writing and reading.

It was Wilhelm Viëtor (nineteenth century) who stressed anew the spoken language as the basis of learning and the learning of meaningful word groups, speech patterns and sentences. Work in Germany, progressing into the twentieth century, made for more definite and recognisable patterns; we might mention as examples: more attention on, and work in phonetics; inductive association of vocabulary and grammatical forms; more graded reading passages and no translation.

Enthusiasm for the New Method was tempered both by advocates of the intellectual discipline of language learning and by the feeling that the method was not achieving its avowed objectives. Men felt that success depended too much on the qualifications of the actual language teachers involved. That the Direct Method fell into disrepute, and that men advocated a "compromise" method will be the subject of a later chapter.

Fries defined the Direct Method as follows:

"The Direct Method is a method of teaching a language especially a modern language, through conversation, discussion and reading in the language itself without use of the pupil's language, without translation, without the study of formal grammar." (15, p.7)

II. A Systematic Description and Analysis of the Direct Method

The historical survey mentioned above was meant to suggest different ideas leading up to a better insight in the Direct Method of language teaching. We propose now to give a more systematic description.

Lado summarizes the first assumption of the Direct Method as follows:

"Learning a foreign language is the same as learning the mother tongue, that is, that exposing the students directly to the foreign language impresses it perfectly upon his mind." (21, p.5)

One learns a foreign language as one learns one's mother tongue. This is done by direct exposure, which impresses the language on the mind.

"Direct contact in meaningful situations." (21, p.4)

Gurrey reports:

"The Direct Method is not properly a 'method' at all. It is a principle, and it is one of the main principle of the psychology of language that can be directly related to classroom procedure." (18, pp.26-27)

"..... the principle may be explained as the associating of word with thing, of thing with context, and of context with expression in the new language." (18, pp.26-27)

"Context may be idea, event, or whole situation; but the fullest application of the method is the associating of a complete thought expressed in words with the real experience that would give the occasion and impulse for the thought." (18, pp.26-27)

"..... the word has been associated with a complete context the word has been encountered in a context of real life." (18, pp.26-27)

Language learning is thus accompanied by sense perception, interest and enjoyment. The learner therefore enters imaginatively into an incident as if it were a reality; there is no need of explanation or translation; thinking and speaking habits are built up simultaneously. Language^{is used} significantly and purposefully; "language is used to find out something that the speaker really wants to know; as it would be used in real life." (18, p.31)

This method therefore stresses the psychological points of language learning: engagement, interest, joy, activity together in the development too of mental habits.

The different names given to the method suggest some of its views;

"It is not one thing but many that we have to reform and that ~~is~~ is the reason why the reformers themselves fall in to so many sub-parties." (20, p.3)

The names are (20, p.3):

1. the intuitive approach
2. the natural method which has no attitude to objects (Lado). This is to consider learning a foreign language as the process of a child learning his mother tongue.
3. The rational method
4. the correct method
5. sensible method
6. direct method
7. the phonetical method, which indicates something of its character, but not nearly enough.
8. the phonetical transcription method for phonetics and phonetical transcription is not all.
9. the imitative method which emphasizes another point.
10. the analytical method (as contrasted with the constructive) could perhaps also be applied to other methods.
11. the concrete method, which calls attention to something essential, but so does the German "anschauungsmethode" too.
12. the conversation method, which reminds us perhaps too much of Berlitz schools.
13. the new or newer method (Lado and Jespersen)

14. die neuere richtung in England
15. the reform method (Lado)
16. anti classical method, which is clumsy and stupidly negative.
17. anti grammatical method, which is clumsy and stupidly negative.
18. anti translational method, which is clumsy and stupidly negative.
19. oral method, which will be given some further remark, later in this chapter.

Lado says that all the names he has mentioned; the natural method, new method, reform method and oral method can be referred to as the direct methods or the Direct Method.

III. Aims, Methods and Techniques.

On the assumptions mentioned above and on the basis of suggestions which the different names have offered, the following conclusions on aims, methods and techniques might be drawn.

The obvious aim of language learning is its use, the passive skill of being able to understand language in use spoken by a native speaker, and the active skill of being capable of making oneself understood as one native speaker would communicate to another. The accent is put primarily on speech as the first objective, i.e. active oral use, as a basis of further objectives in reading and writing which may be added. The word "added" however needs to be qualified, for, if one follows strictly the principle of learning as a child learns its mother tongue, then in the original stages no use is made of the written language. As Sweet says in his book "The Practical Study of Languages", found in Palmer's book:

"The purely oral exercises of question and answer in the foreign language should precede any attempts at written reproduction of what has been learnt, partly on the general ground that the fixed associations of the ear should precede the secondary and perhaps variable associations of the written form of the language, partly because of the facility and quickness which they can be worked. They have the further advantage of training the pupils both to understand what is said, and reproduce it with accuracy and ease. They are, in fact, the best possible substitute for a phonetic method, although they will be ten times more efficient if preceded by systematic training in phonetics. They are also in the highest degree stimulating to the pupils, and develop quickness, presence of mind, and the power of observation." (27, p.3)

However, as appeared clearly out of the historical sketch given, reading, i.e. contact with the written language, is often introduced in the early stages; it is a vital part

of language besides being an introduction to the knowledge of the people and their customs, institution and ways of life. One emphasizes therefore pieces of reading that are to be well chosen not primarily because of linguistic content but rather because of cultural content.

A further aim, based on insights shown to have grown historically, is to tackle the teaching situation psychologically, i.e. through direct association of words and sentences with their meaning. The learner is actively engaged in the subject being learned, and is helped thus by dramatization, demonstration, use of concrete situations as well as aural and visual aids. These situations must be meaningful.

On this basis, the language taught is always in the form of communication.

"We ought to learn a language through sensible communications; there must be a certain connection in the thoughts communicated in the new language. Disconnected sentences are but stones for bread; Indeed not even disconnected sentences ought to be used," (20, p.11)

Jespersen then says later that it is unwise to put into practice the learning of disconnected sentences as thereby sound pedagogical principles are neglected. (20, p.14)

Because of this direct contact (Lado) with the language, the Direct Method does not allow any use of the mother tongue or of translation. The use of the former, either in the form of explanation or as matter for comparison, would go against the direct situation method, while the use of translation would stimulate the use of a "compound system" in which there would not be direct association of reality to symbol, but association of the symbols of one language in those of the other.

As the child learns unconsciously to speak and use the language grammatically, not in such a way that grammar is first presented and then applied, but through trial and error, through use and correction, so the foreign language learner too will start with the actual use of the language, from which inductively the grammar will be obtained. There is no place in the Direct Method for the deductive grammar. Based too on this use of language as spoken and accepted at a certain moment in the history of its " drift ", the grammar thus inductively presented, will not arise out of a preconceived general idea of what the grammar of this language or of language in general should be, but will reveal what is actual in use at a certain historical stage of development.

To sum up what so far has been said, we quote from Jespersen:

"Language is not an end in itself, ... it is a way of connection between souls, ... it is the most complete, the richest, the best means of communication; ... (20, p.4)

"The purpose of learning foreign languages, then, must be in order to get a way of communication with places which our native tongue cannot reach, " (20, p.5)

"..... it must not be overlooked that everything which is learned with a sensible end in view, and according to a sensible method, tends in itself more or less directly to develop valuable faculties, " (20, p.7)

If we have thus far given the salient points of the Direct Method as a reaction against former grammar translation methods , it must however be remembered, as Lado points out, "in supplementing and adapting it to different pupils and situations, the direct methods evolved and changed." (21, p.5) It would be interesting therefore to report on the views of Palmer, who, as Lado continues developed a variety of oral drills, that are the predecessors of the pattern practice. In this way, in the light of further developments in language learning study, led by one who for his method uses the term Oral Method, a clearer understanding of what one held to be the Direct Method might be got.

For Palmer, The Direct Method does not plunge the student into the spoken language without having to do any preliminary book work nor does it primarily stress assimilation of language material by ear. It is the method of one school of Reform, that of the Educational authorities, inspired by what Jespersen calls:

"....., the highest purpose in the teaching of languages the access to the best thoughts and institutions of a foreign nation, its literature, culture — in short, the spirit of the nation in the widest sense of the word! (20, p.9)

Not particularly concerned with utilitarian purposes, this school tended to consider modern languages as an adjunct to modern studies, with strong emphasis on the idealistic purposes of a linguistic program:

- " - to lay the foundation of scholarship;
- to develop thought and taste through the study and practice of the use of language as a fine art;
- to develop imaginative sympathy through the study of literature in a historical and comprehensive view; and
- to be a means of complete culture enlightenment" (27, pp.8-9)

For this scholar, as contrasted to the practical linguist, the aims are humanistic, language is mastered not for immediate purposes but because language is an instrument of culture.

In the methods therefore the Direct Method excludes the use of traditional orthography for the first stage; it specifies that reading matter shall consist of connected texts, dialogues, de-

scription and narratives, all as easy, natural and interesting as possible; it provides a programme of matter to be assimilated consciously; it develops the pupils' power of analysis and synthesis, it allows for the supplementation of ear work by eye work.

What the implications of this method mean can be seen by contrasting it to the Oral Method as advocated by Palmer. The latter is that method in which the student is plunged straight into the spoken language without doing any preliminary book work. One mixes with native speakers, listens, accustoms oneself to hearing, forces oneself to understand, imitates and memorises auditorily. There is no grammar study, written work or conscious analysis. In actual practice however satisfactory results depend on what is called "observing the rules of the game"; for instance, proper observation, proper habit formation etc.

Dr. H. Sweet advocated the precedence of oral exercises, partly on the general ground that the fixed association of the ear should precede the secondary and perhaps variable associations of the written forms of the language, partly because of the facility and quickness with which they can be worked. These exercises give the best training in understanding and in production to accuracy and ease; they are the most stimulating, and develop quickness, presence of mind, and the power of observation.

The Direct and Oral Methods are therefore not synonymous terms. For the latter, language mastery means the acquisition of a working knowledge of the language for immediate purposes, so that one can converse to native speakers, naturally, fluently and idiomatically, so as to awaken their sympathy and confidence. (27, p.9) As method, it makes no use whatever of the written form, there is no reading matter, the pupils' powers of unconscious assimilation are trained and developed, the pupils' powers of memorising and habit forming are brought into play, all work being unaided ear-work. Though admitted that the Oral Method might be an essential yet preliminary stage in language learning, its defenders maintain that "it will reawaken^{and} reeducate those spontaneous capacities for language study which are inherent in the human race, those innate powers manifested in the earliest years of childhood, but which are generally allowed by disuse to recede into a latent state." (27, p.11) Furthermore Palmer continues that the Oral Method should rarely stand alone; it should be used in proper coordination with a more complete program of linguistic study, a program which will also contain a due proportion of written work.

The justifications of this Oral Method are listed as fol-

lows:

1. that learning to speak a language is by far the shortest road to learning to read and write it; it is an art which the every other art, must be acquired by practice.
2. that it is able to bring about a practical mastery of speech, correct spoken usage, which, as some hold, has educational besides more utilitarian importance.
3. that it takes into consideration the pupils natural gift or dispositions.
4. that language is learned in its natural setting, in motivation, in context, in full sentences (not isolated units).
5. that memorisation always proceeds through articulation.

The Direct Method therefore was a serious attempt to better language learning in a changing world, where active communication between different language groups was becoming more frequent. The value of language learning for less utilitarian purposes however was also acknowledged. This new method was a radical break with the past; we shall now see that it was but the first step towards better motivated and planned language learning in the future.

CHAPTER IV

THE FAILURES OF THE DIRECT METHOD

Though the Direct Method was at first widely acclaimed, its comparatively short life proved that it did not fulfil the expectations that it suggested. As the next chapter has been planned to describe the most modern approach to language teaching and learning, the purpose of this chapter is to suggest a number of criticisms, to explain the somewhat rapid failure of the Direct Method. Most of the teachers will confess to having tried this method without much success and to have fallen back on a method whose concern is memorising grammatical definitions and rules of correctness, together to a good dose of translation. (13, p.275)

"It is not enough, as the followers of the Direct Method complacently believe, to go on using English in the classroom to the strict exclusion of the mother tongue and hope that eventually through some magical process they will pick up English." (13, pp.278-279)

"Such a process of presenting a language to the learners is bound to be lengthy, wasteful and inefficient." (13, pp.278-279)

With this general statement as criticism we would arrange our criticisms under the following headings :

- I. Criticism from the more psychological point of view.
- II. Criticism from the more linguistic point of view.
- III. criticism from the more pedagogical point of view.

I. Criticism from the More Psychological Point of View.

Certain very important considerations concerning the teaching and learning of a second language are ignored by the Direct Method. Learning one's first language seems so easy that language teachers have sought to duplicate the process in teaching a second language. This point of view has its many flaws.

Rivers, in "The Psychologist and the Foreign Language Teaching", points to the first difference, namely in that of the organs of speech. In learning his mother tongue the child starts very early; his speech habits are still in a plastic stage. (28, p.101) He is discovering the possibilities of his own organs by means of imitating what he hears; later he produces sounds to express his wants and desires. That a child can learn to use these speech organs for any language that is first offered to him, is a well established fact. Moreover this physical maturation takes place simultaneously with the formation of concepts and the devel-

opment of the forms of speech of his community. The formation and use of his speech organs is therefore part of a more integrated whole, with as basis the production of and experimentation with a number of sounds, which in connection with what he hears, with what he tries to imitate, and with what he finds as useful or not, gradually become more differentiated. Some are further ignored, others are strengthened, and, as Fries points out some more general areas of sound are gradually subdivided to produce the specific speech sounds or phonemes of the language that is being learnt. (14, pp.67-68)

The speech organs of an adult learner, on the other hand, have through this process become somewhat fixed. The production of new sounds or the further differentiation if necessary of learned sounds demands new physical accommodation of his speech organs. The English [ɹ] [θ] for instance is a problem for the Javanese learner; vice versa too the [ɔ] and [ɔ̃]. The Javanese learner of English has to learn two new sounds; the English learner of Javanese has to split the one phoneme /ɔ/ of English into two separate Javanese phonemes. The sound clusters likewise produce problems. New speech habits have therefore to be learned by organs which have already somewhat settled according to the system and habits of the first language. Receptioners to new uses implies the tackling of older established habits.

Secondly, in native language learning, the child forms concepts of the environment. Here too the child's mind can be thought of as a "tabula rasa" (21, p.6), there is nothing that gets in the way of learning; the structures of his language are precisely what teach him how to think, and provide the materials to think with. We will not discuss further here the relation between the two substructures of language, namely expression and content, and how the one influences the other. Clear however is that if these two are built up simultaneously in the child learning his mother tongue, this is not the case in an adult, who has already made habitual a structure of expression and a structure of content and the definite association between these two. (17, p.6)

One therefore speaks of interference and of transfer in adult language learning.

"Added difficulty in learning a sound, word or construction in a second language as a result of differences in habits of the native language" (21, p.217), and "the extension of a native language habit into a target language with or without the awareness of the learner. (21, p.222)

If most authors use these two terms in reference to linguistic patterns, we might say that psychologically they are worth considera-

tion too. While certain habits in native language learning have been formed, they will interfere in the different problems arising out of a different situation in second language learning, and thus create in a very definite way, a measure of transfer in the learning of languages.

A further psychological factor in language learning to be considered is that of motivation and environment. The infant has a tremendous desire to communicate. He has needs he wants supplied. He is anxious to gain the attention and share in the activities of those around him. The child learns to talk because society makes that relatively effortless response extremely worth while. (28, pp.102-103)

"The need and urge to communicate through language to fulfill the complex needs of a human being are a constant stimulus to use language." (21, p.34)

The child has the compelling necessity for learning his mother tongue, that of his environment, because he is quick to perceive that at every step he is handicapped by the fact that he cannot express his needs as effectively as others in the family do. When once a perfect medium of expression has been acquired, this compelling necessity is no longer present. The new-to-be-learned language will be even strange, difficult and seemingly useless. There may however be other motives to spur him on, viz. desire to learn another language, to please parents, to get good paid etc., but there are not the motives of the child. The situation of the second language learning is therefore different; there is the sympathetic home environment and the more disciplined, sometimes unpleasant but always more demanding environment of the class. The gradual perfection of the communication process is different too; an adult learner will from the very first be thwarted in his lack of knowledge and he must be willing to return in spirit and in production to an earlier stage of learning. The joy of the child will not necessarily be present in that of the adult learner. To dare humble himself to mimicry of a teacher remains a challenge for the adult learner.

II. Criticism from a more Linguistic Point of View.

While a child moreover learns his mother tongue without conscious awareness, this is not so for the adult learner. This brings us to the second set of criticisms we might formulate, that is, those from a more linguistic point of view.

The child begins with simple words which act as complete



sentences, and the meanings of which are understood as such. He names things incorrectly while forming categories, he mispronounces words and makes approximations to the sounds heard around him and this is considered "cute" (28, p.102) by the many patients and sympathetic teachers, which are continually around him. He is continually rewarded in his fumbling steps, and slowly and unsteadily he achieves control of a most complex grammatical system. The adult however is, linguistically, expected to learn complete sentences of complicated grammatical structure from the very first. He must repeat these accurately and pronounce clearly. He may not experiment with new combinations and analogies. His mistakes are not "cute" but dangerous in that they represent decremental, not incremental learning. The task therefore of the adult learner is both psychologically different in that his situation and his learning differ from that of the child; but linguistically too, as he is from the very first expected to produce complete sentences.

Another linguistic aspect worth consideration is the reasoning that holds that because a child learns the ear and tongue without the support of the eye, for which it is physically not yet ready, so the adult too must pass through the same stages. We have however mentioned that in practice however the position of reading or of contact with the written language has not been so clearly defined, so that Lado says that the Direct Method deteriorated towards a mere teaching of reading. (21, p.5) A legitimate case might be made out for the order of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing will recourse to infant learning, though, as Rivers has concluded after a lengthy discussion:

"such judicious use of the written script in association with to oral practice of the language, finds ample support in psychological theory." (28, p.114)

III. Criticism from the More Pedagogical Point of View.

Further, the Direct or Natural Method may be criticized from the viewpoint that its advocates had no clear idea of the concept and of the gradation of structure and materials. One who has mastered the mother tongue has procured a set of habits, which, if he is not careful, will be transposed to the new language. We might cite the following example at some length to show where the difficulties lie, and see in what sense, as earlier quoted, the method can be wasteful and uneconomical. Choice of material is not based on a sound scientific basis.

In the Indonesian language we have the sentence:

1. Apakah Ali sakit?

2. Sakitkah Ali?

3. Ali sakit?

which is rendered in English by:

4. Is Ali ill ? or

5. Ali is ill ?

whereas the meaning of the sentences are the same the forms of both languages are different. There is first the question of intonation; only sentence (3) corresponds to sentences (4) and (5). Furthermore we see that Indonesian has the possibility of using a function word 'apakah' (1) or a function suffix (-kah) in (2) to form a question. Though these two function words are commonly used they are not a necessity to form a question. Their function is to give more emphasis and for the sake of politeness. By changing the intonation only without any other change in the sentence, it will be enough in Indonesian to form a question. English does not have a similar structural device. The common English structural device as seen in (4) is the inversion of class I word with class II word; the Indonesian sentence has no class II word.

This example is but a very simple one. One who has mastered Indonesian would be tempted to say in English: Ill Ali ?, thereby transferring the habits of his native language. The foreign language learner has therefore to establish new habits ranging from simple to difficult ones. In the next chapter we will see that one assumption of the Oral Approach to language teaching is the fact that each language has its own system on different levels, varying in more than one way with that of another language. From here the problems to^{be} taught and practiced can be deduced, as well as those that have to be tested. In teaching, the Direct Method does not consider what might be easy or difficult to learn. The materials are not related to the student's language background and experience; they are neither graded in order of difficulty. And so in testing too the Direct Method does not set up valid tests on the difficulties of the learning of a certain language. Moreover being situational in its approach, the Direct Method gives rise to the danger that correct and incorrect answers given in tests of the Direct Method type might depend on factors other than those of language.

A failure of the Direct Method has been signalled by Manindra K. Verma (34, p.277), who reports that the method might put too much stress on vocabulary item learning because of the common reaction arising out of the experience with one's own language; when thinking of one's language we take into consideration what is

learned actively and consciously, and ignore the basic parts, the pronunciation and grammatical structure, which are not the object of conscious learning. Our consideration of the Oral Approach will have to take place the various elements of language in their right focus.

We have already reported the observation that the Direct Method deteriorated to become a method based primarily on Reading. Language was approached through its written form. We shall see in the assumptions we mention in the next chapter, that this approach was linguistically unsound.

A final criticism on the more practical side of the method may now be mentioned. It was said that the best teacher of a language would be the native speaker, completely versed in the language and culture, who need not be acquainted with, and may certainly not use the mother tongue of his students. In such a case the teacher will lack one vital element in the communication situation of his class; he will be unacquainted with the background and therefore too with the problems of the particular students before him. He is not allowed to make use of the mother tongue in his explanations, where its use would more efficient or would supply a clear check to see if certain elements have been understood.

The implications of the classroom situation of language learning might be considered, as here both numbers of students as environment of learning differ from native language learning situation. Gurrey stresses the interest and enjoyment that go with language learning. We hold however that too much emphasis on pleasant learning might decrease effectiveness. A classroom situation is necessarily different from a home situation.

CHAPTER V

THE ORAL APPROACH AND ITS ASSUMPTIONS

The inadequacies and failures of the Direct Method and the great progress made in the field of linguistic science brought into existence a new approach in language teaching and learning, variously named the Oral Approach, the Linguistic Approach or the "Audio Lingual Approach". (28, p.112)

I. Approach, Methods, Techniques.

Because of certain unclarities in terminology — approach, methods, techniques — a discussion of these is considered necessary before a description is given of the modern ideas and trends in second language learning. The terms approach, method and technique are, according to Anthony, hierarchical: techniques carry out a method, which itself is consistent with an approach. (2, p.94)

An approach, Anthony says, is "a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning." It is "axiomatic."

"It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. It states a point of view, a philosophy." (2, p.94)

A method is procedural.

"Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, ^{and} all of which is based upon, the selected approach." (2, p.95)

As illustration of method, we might mention the question of the influence of a learner's native language and his previous experiences. (2, p.95)

A technique is "implementational — that which actually takes place in the classroom."

"It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective." (2, p.96)

We are now ready to give a clearer description of the Oral Approach, which by many has wrongly been considered as hardly different to the other methods we have touched upon. In spite of external similarities, e.g. use of oral drills and other types of oral practices, the time given to oral exercises, "the Oral Approach is essentially different. It is more than a set of classroom techniques. Its goal is not limited to the mastery of 'conversational'. Its chief purpose is not simply the achieving of good English pronunciation."

"Two important features characterize the heart and sub-

stance of the Oral Approach :

- 1) a much more clearly defined goal for the first stage of language learning;
- 2) a much more complete understanding of what is essential in the materials to be studied in order to attain that goal." (10, p.85)

"The heart of the New Approach to language teaching is this application of some of the basic principles and views of modern linguistics " (10, p.86)

This chapter will deal with these basic principles as they concern language and language teaching, so as to describe methods and techniques in the next chapter.

II. Linguistic Assumptions, and Language Learning and Teaching Assumptions.

The basic linguistic assumptions of what language is are:

- 1) "language is human, aural-oral and symbolically meaningful."
 - 2) "any given language is structured uniquely." This can also be stated negatively: "no two languages are structured alike."
 - 3) "the structure of a language can be discovered, and usefully and systematically described."
- (2, p.94)

Some necessary corollaries follow from these basic assumptions:

a) if language is human, then it is a form of human behaviour of a certain kind; it is verbal behaviour. The actual implication of this conclusion may not have been fully understood and worked out, but attention of modern psycholinguistics on this aspect has progressed. The conclusions will influence the way this verbal behaviour is to be taught.

b) if language is aural-oral, then writing is a secondary manifestation and ultimately speech based. Though this statement is not meant to decide on the relative importance of speech and writing, it has given the new approach the subject matter of analysis, as well as the method to be followed in the first stage of language learning.

In Traditional Grammar the primary source of information was to be found in books on pronunciation, grammar, and style. The attitude of the linguist however, of whom many Americans have done work on Indian languages, of which there were no written materials, was that the ultimate source of information about a language was the native speaker of that language. The spoken language was therefore analyzed, through contact with the native speaker informant. The linguist hereby carried over into language analysis the concept of informant which was already familiar in anthropological field

work.

The aural-oral symbolization of language influenced the methods of language teaching. Stress is, therefore, laid on the oral skills, both active and passive, not as a descriptive limitation of the permissible devices to attain an end, but as the end to be attained in the first stages of language learning. The primary objective therefore is clear; once this objective has been achieved, one can consider how other objectives, including for instance the skill of reading and writing, might be tackled. The emphasis on spoken language rests on the fact that "language originates as speech, and innovations that occur in the history of a language begin in the spoken tongue."

"The written language may use conventions that obscure its basic structure." (8, p.117)

" Speech is the language." (26, p.88)

" Writing is the representation of speech, though not necessary a perfect one." (29, p.264)

One aims first therefore at the most complete and characteristic expression of language, its spoken form.

c) the symbols of language that are meaningful are therefore these found in speech; written symbols are but a representation of these latter.

"The oral language is the basis of communication." (7, p. xiii)

Following this natural gradation given in language itself, it can be concluded that the most efficient and direct way of learning a language is along parallel lines. The teaching and reading should at first be based on what has orally been mastered. In so far as it further contains separate and special problems, it is a skill to be taught apart from speaking and listening.

An important feature of the New Approach is the idea of the structure of language, which is moreover unique in every language. If former views stressed, as we have seen, lexical items, it is this new approach that has emphasized the fact that total linguistic meaning is the sum of both structural meaning and lexical meaning. The structure of a language, it was found, could be dealt with in different substructures, starting from the basic sound structures found in the phonological system of a language, and progressing through the morphological system to the syntactical system, each and all based on the actual language spoken and accepted at a certain time of its general history or "drift". Fries therefore says that the foreign language learner should acquire as habits: "the sound system that is to understand the stream of speech, to hear the distinctive sound features and approximate their pro-

duction; the features of arrangement that constitute the structure of the language." (15, p.3)

These latter are the formal patterns of the language which carry the distinctive structural meanings. As the child has learned these at an early stage of its language learning, to become unconscious habits before the increase of its vocabulary has been tackled on perhaps a more conscious basis, so the foreign language learner too has to make these habits his own before concentrating on the lexical items of the new language.

The description of this structure is the systematic description of the forms.

"The linguists argued that a good description of a language must be a description of its forms because semantic definitions of grammatical classes, the traditional definitions are logically indefensible and useless in practice, because it would be extremely difficult to frame better semantic definitions, because linguistic forms, on the other hand, can be made the subject of very precise statements, and because, in language, meanings are communicated only by the forms that bear them, so that the only access to the meanings is through the forms." (31, pp.7-8)

Nelson Francis says:

"The description, analysis and set of definitions and formulas — rules if you will — based firmly and consistently on the easiest object of language which is form." (8, p.121)

We see here therefore that analysis of language as based on forms and not on meaning, as it was done in Traditional Grammar. A worked out analysis of form in English has been worked out by Fries in his book "The Structure of English".

The second type of assumptions of the New Approach relate to language teaching and learning. The first element of the three priority statements has already been touched upon, namely that primary manifestations of language must be taught before secondary manifestations. In these different manifestations there are these that have priority, so that the order of language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, is taken as basic.

"Because the foreign language is a set of arbitrary symbols adopted by a certain community, with an arbitrary standard of acceptable pronunciation, it is obvious that the student should hear it correctly before endeavoring to reproduce it. It is also obvious that he cannot learn it accurately from a script with which he has always associated his own speech sounds, unless an initiate unlocks for him the secrets of the new sound associations." (28, p.103)

Other levels of language — tertiary in this scheme — such as literary and artistic manifestations, follow the former manifestations. For pedagogical reasons too the order to be maintained in teaching is that of the receptive before the productive skills: one reads first before attempting to create oneself stylistic writing.

The procedural assumption based on what has been said above states that: 1) languages are habits; 2) habits are established by repetition; 3) language must be taught through repetition of some sort.

Foreign language learning is basically a mechanical, not an intellectual process of habit formation, comparable to a skill in art or craft and not to a mental discipline. This is learned through practice, through "overlearning".

If the structure of language is made up of the two substructures of expression and content, symbols carrying meaning, then in the most normal use of language, attention is put on the latter while the former is used "out of awareness".

"The ordinary speaker is aware of what he says, not of how he says it". (26, p.87)

The mechanics of a language have become a habit: choice of the elements of the expression structure on phonemic, morphemic and structural levels is made unthinkingly. These habits have therefore to be established. As they are unique for each language translation cannot be used. The practice which the student contributes is oral practice, constant imitation, repetition, practice, and drill. The element of controlled practice, leading gradually from conscious choice to freer use (Lado), is given priority in order and in time, to be followed later, if necessary, by statements concerning structure and use. These latter are summaries and generalizations drawn from the actual sentences the students have already practised and understood thoroughly.

A final assumption of the New Approach is the usefulness of bilingual comparison; after careful, scientific independent analysis of the unique system of the two languages under consideration, one can isolate those features of the target language which can be predicted with a fair degree of accuracy, to cause trouble for the learner. It is these that will constitute the material of teaching and of testing. A full justification of this need, together with the method of conducting a comparative analysis, has been worked out by Lado in his "Linguistics Across Cultures". Materials based on such an analysis will be the basis of the most effective and complete teaching and learning.

Concluding this chapter we might summarize our findings under the heading of language mastery, defined by Fries as "mastery of the sound system, of the features of arrangement and patterns of forms that constitute the grammatical structure of the language". (13, p.275) These moreover have to be mastered as habit.

CHAPTER VI

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF THE ORAL APPROACH

From the description of the assumptions of the Oral Approach, which is not to be taken as a statement of the method to be used by the teacher but rather as an indication of the achievement to be expected from the pupil, based on assumptions on what language is and what language teaching and learning involves, we come to the methods and techniques suggested by the advocates of this New Approach.

We have defined method as the overall pattern of presentation, and may subsumize under this heading: the material and the teacher. Language has to be presented in such a way, the teacher must so act, and materials must be so chosen that we arrive at the particular objectives set. These objectives we have seen can be many: command of the language simply to be able to 'get along' or to 'pass as a native'; to acquire the humanistic values that are supposed to accrue from the study of foreign languages, or the appreciation of great works of literature. From what we have seen however in our chapter on the assumption of the Oral Approach, in the first stage of language learning as noted by Fries, there is but one objective to be attained whatever other directions the further language studies might turn into. As the Oral Approach is the basic and necessary introduction into the foreign language, we may limit ourselves to the methods and techniques suggested to procure this particular aim, mindful of what Carrol says on page 169, that different methods of instruction, considered as such, are but superficial elements indicating little of the nature of the things the student learns or the way in which he learns. The methods indicated by the Oral Approach must therefore grow naturally and completely from the assumptions on which they are based.

Several factors influence the orderly presentation of language to students. We have touched on some in our previous chapter.

The orderly presentation involves in the first place that the oral language is given before the written language. This basic assumption calls however for further qualification. As Fries pointed out, the name Oral Approach makes no decision on the possible devices that may legitimately be used to achieve the oral end. The spoken language and the written language, two systems which are often separate and different in some way, have their own problems. In orderly presentation as advocated here, it is suggested that no two problems are given simultaneously in the formation of habits.

Consequently no written word — in the form of new structures or vocabulary items — will be given before these elements have been fully orally mastered. New elements found in orthography will not hamper the progress of the students. Written material may be used when necessary to better memory and understanding, if the value of the symbols used is understood in their oral terms. (28, p.114) The statement therefore that letters are pronounced in such and such a way ought better to be changed into: these sounds are written in such a fashion. The use of these written symbols will depend on the value they have in aiding the acquiring of the desired goal. From here, any reading included in early stages is never of the extensive kind; it is intensive — the intensifying of material and only that material that has not been given orally.

It is on this respect that a work of Rivers seems to be important. She is primarily a psycholinguist, who in her attempts to use the findings of psychology in language learning, pinpoints the simplistic fallacy that all work should proceed orally as happens in the case of a child. Studies have been made in the field of perception, in the age and linguistic background of language learners and on the collaboration between ear and eye work. (28, pp.105-113) We might conclude that orderly presentation here involves the problem of what factors determine the use of written material in the first stages where the oral goal is primary.

Orderly presentation involves secondly the graded presentation of those problems that have been found in the contrastive analysis made between the two languages involved. The time given to each particular learning problem depends therefore on the existence of the particular problem for students of a certain native language background and on the relative difficulty in learning that this problem presents.

Problems have to be tackled individually, in steps, by means of oral practice, in which the principle holds that the problem is so put that the student is encouraged to give the correct response. (5, p.185) This is a principle of the pattern practice. Palmer with his Oral Method was reported to be the predecessor of the pattern practice of the New Method, which as a perfection of the Oral Method is defined by Lado as: "rapid oral drill on problem patterns with attention on something other than the problem itself." (21, p.105) It is a stage further than simple imitation or repetitions and conscious drill exercises, it is a more graded and systematic approach than mim-mem (mimicry-memorisation) exercises in which one sets off from a situation, repeats and memorises a number of

sentences, of which certain structures are then given extra exercise and drill, it is basically the method of making unconscious as habit the use of certain basic structures with "cues that control the changes in each succeeding response not at the problem point of the pattern." (21, p.106) It is only after pattern practice that full attention is given on purposeful communication, in which one has to select freely the different patterns necessary. If we study the different types of pattern practice as given by Lado, we see too how the orderly presentation is developed. (21, p. 96) From simple substitution, to substitution in variable slots, to substitutions that form a change, to substitution that must be changed and to multiple substitution of this kind. The same orderliness in presentation can be traced on the methods advocated to conduct a conversation class. (21, p.100) Furthermore it is these basic patterns that are first concentrated on, before attention is put on vocabulary expansion. Pattern practice with a very limited vocabulary; vocabulary expansion is a much later skill in language learning. (5, p.183) As a conscious acquiring on the part of the child as well as of each adult, it necessarily follows the mastery of the habits of structure and pattern into which vocabulary items can then be put and be understood in the overall context given. As words used are meaningful in context, and as context influences too the meaning, so vocabulary items are not learned in the form of lists, as declensions of nouns and conjugation of verbs or in the form of paradigms.

Under the same heading of orderly presentation we find the distinction given by Lado between element and skill. Skills are taught after elements in so far as the former are a combination of various elements. In the elements themselves a certain order might be necessary. (22, p.204) As illustration, we might mention a new point stressed by Lado that namely supra segmental phonemes if they exist in a language they must be taught first before the segmental phonemes. (21, pp.76-77) These later, occurring in words, phrases or sentences, have a certain rhythm. Ignoring this at first involves relearning and correction when finally this important part of the phonemic system is tackled.

No use is made of the mother tongue in the sense of translation. If a very strict line is drawn concerning the order of the four skills to be learned, listening, speaking, reading, writing, it is translation, which earlier had been considered as a basic and primary skill, that is put at the very end, and even outside of the commonly found enumeration. It is a skill quite different from the

rest, and not moreover a necessary part of language mastery.

The qualification expected of a teacher using this approach are therefore many: he must have a knowledge of linguistics, if not of the science, then certainly of the results of language research in native language and foreign language; he must have a firm command of both languages; he must be aware of the psychological problems of his students, i.e. factor of age, environment, previous experience, motivation etc.

The techniques tell us what actually takes place in the class. An Oral Approach class is characterized by a great amount of oral work done by the students themselves in the class, repeating after and imitating the teacher in the first stages, to proceed towards active oral production later. We have mentioned the mim-mem technique and the pattern practice technique. The first is more situational and therefore often in the form of dialogues. Language is presented in its actual use through the presentation of a stimulating situation. The latter method, in practice perhaps less interesting, seems however to be more efficient and functional, as it builds up and drills those problems that have been found to exist through a bilingual comparison. Lado says that the mim-mem method "tends to give the same amount of practice to easy and difficult problems"; moreover "it also concentrates unduly on the memorisation of specific sentences, and not enough on the manipulation of the patterns of sentences in a variety of content situations". (21, p.93) The latter is an exercise in structural dexterity; a typical structure is drilled so that it can then be used as a "frame" for modelling other utterances by such processes as substitution, expansion and transformation. The student has learned the use of analogy.

The pattern practice technique especially follows the presumption that clues must be given in such a way that the student is stimulated to give the correct answer almost unconsciously. It is not a puzzle solving procedure. The incorrect use of language is moreover never encouraged, as each repetition of a faulty use of language will leave a trace that ought not to be there and will hamper the habit formation of the correct use.

The word "trace" we have found in Lado. It is the "minimal facility which is assumed to result from each experience". (21, p.222) "Each experience leaves a trace in the memory store", so that "all previous experiences are a factor in learning". (21, p.39)

The memory has to be activated by repetitions of experiences, i.e. through repeated exercises. These latter will increase

the memory span. Moreover as new materials are being given, there will have to be repetitions of previous learning. The number of these repetitions, together with the time of giving these, is indicated by Lado (21, p.45) when he speaks of the geometric law of learning, a law which lays down when repetitions have to be given, so that there is neither too long a span between similar experiences to cause that the first has been forgotten, or too short a span, which would cause an unnecessary repetition and therefore a waste of valuable learning time. It is obvious that with better memory the span between repetitions will likewise become longer.

The oral approach advocates therefore a graded and controlled oral habit formation. This is done by giving such clues that suggest right responses, which are immediately reinforced. (21,p. 55) This latter is a psychological device obviously applicable to language teaching.

Concluding therefore we may say that the techniques employed in the Oral Approach, that is what we expect to find in a class using this approach, are centered around one idea: the students have to be given as much practice as possible, particularly in the first two skills of listening and speaking. This practice must form habits. The teacher is the model, he must be imitated and he must correct. The material is graded according to the problems of the particular students. Habits are formed by pattern practice, by which the students mastering a pattern are then able to make similar analogous sentences. From the very first the student is expected to use sentences, if this does not immediately succeed the teacher may give part of sentences, may slow down the speed, or even give some information, all of which are held to come to correct language use.

We have not spoken of audio-visual aids, which are becoming more and more popular. This would be a discussion in itself. We might only say here that the use of mechanical aids can never completely take the place of a teacher.

CONCLUSION

Lado in his book "Language Teaching" (p.6) has put the question "where now?"; he has asked himself the question of along what lines we might expect progress in foreign language teaching in the future, hoping that present methods will not become frozen for generations.

We have in one work tried to trace the steps towards the most modern approach in foreign language learning; we cannot say that we have found the very last word. It is our impression, considering the work achieved by two of its major advocates, Lado and Fries, that though much has been achieved for language learning in the early stages of learning, much has still to be done for the later stages. The materials so far provided and the tests that have up to now been designed, treat only of the earliest stages in language learning. If it is argued that the Oral Approach is only meant for the first stages of foreign language learning, then we still look forward in the future to new materials for later stages based on acceptable principles.

Lado then says:

"Since much of present progress is due to advances in linguistics, it is tempting to look for stricter adherence to its techniques as the road to further progress. This, however, might actually stifle progress, since linguistics as a science describes those phenomena that can be objectively described within the limits of its postulates and leaves undescribed other phenomena that lie beyond. Language teaching, on the other hand, must proceed to teach language in use whether or not every aspect of it has been linguistically described." (21, p.7)

We would like to reword his remarks as follows: language teaching has still to learn much from psychology; much progress is hoped for from psycholinguistics.

Rivers, in the final chapter of her work which we have mentioned earlier, speaks for instance of the need of giving the students an understanding of the rationale for the pattern drills they must do, as this will encourage understanding, counter boredom and fatigue, and make acceptable much rote learning which they do not experience in the other subjects taught. Too much boredom for instance will make learning distasteful, while what is learned as such might later arouse associations of an unpleasant emotional kind. Too many exercises of memorization and drill, involving the same kind of mental process and overt activity, forgets the human factor in learning. There must be enough variety in manner of teaching and in the content taught. The word "overlearning" then used

has therefore its dangers. Learning will best take place when there is enough flexibility: i.e. when more attention is placed on the situations in which patterns can be used. As language remains a tool for expression of culture, more emphasis on the "what" said as well as more emphasis on the expression of own ideas will encourage better overall learning.

If Lado continues "since electronic devices continue to improve, it is tempting to seek progress by having all teaching done by machines," (21, p.7) we might note that besides the great advantages expected from language laboratories, where students can practice individually and perhaps be helped by the knowledge that they are with themselves in their first halting attempts at mimicry, and where they can somewhat regulate their own learning speed, yet the laboratory may never replace the teacher. It can only help him and language learning up to a certain point. The human factor in the learning of this human skill may not be overlooked. Tapes must always be well planned and reckoned with the reaction of the class as a whole or of the individual. There must be enough variety. Though reinforcement of exercises given is always encouraged by having the tape give the right answer after allowing the student to make his answer, experience has proved that a student may continue to misunderstand the reinforcement. A personal contact with the teacher is always better, either through a face-to-face contact or through careful monitoring of each individual. In the latter case the students might be helped personally; the tape is never made for one individual. We must moreover not forget that in the laboratory hours the students miss a face-to-face contact; when language is used in direct communication, a new situation therefore, he might have to overcome fear and shyness.

A big load of responsibility therefore falls on the individual teacher. The position of the language teacher is different from that of any other teacher. A relaxed, humourful and sympathetic attitude often make good what in material or method might be lacking. He must be flexible, inspire motivation and security, give confidence and eagerness. From being a tedious classroom hour the language lesson must become a living experience of communication.

If the Oral Approach has set us on the right lines in the understanding of what language is and perhaps in how it ought to be taught, the future of language learning depends much on the findings of psycholinguistics.

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