Spring 1966

A Study Of Past And Present Language Teaching Methodology With A Consideration Of The Unity Theory

Joyce Leonard
Carroll College

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.carroll.edu/langlit_theses

Part of the French and Francophone Language and Literature Commons, and the Language and Literacy Education Commons

Recommended Citation
Leonard, Joyce, "A Study Of Past And Present Language Teaching Methodology With A Consideration Of The Unity Theory" (1966). Languages and Literature Undergraduate Theses. 127.
https://scholars.carroll.edu/langlit_theses/127
A STUDY OF PAST AND PRESENT LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY
WITH A CONSIDERATION OF THE UNITY THEORY

Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of French
Carroll College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts in French

by
Joyce Joan Leonard
May 1966
The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of Studies, have examined a thesis entitled A STUDY OF PAST AND PRESENT LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY WITH A CONSIDERATION OF THE UNITY THEORY presented by Joyce Joan Leonard, a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in French and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

[Signature]

(Preface)

The purpose of this paper was initially, to give a short synopsis of the history and present situation of language teaching, with a presentation of views as to what the future may bring to language methodology. The general purpose has remained the same throughout my research, though a second purpose has arisen—what is, a clarification of my own ideas in regard to what specific method is best to use in the classroom in order to convey knowledge, and that the latter part of this paper deals with a presentation of the Unity Theory, which though it is by no means a new theory, is an attempt at integration of the good points in the various prevailing methods of modern foreign language teaching.

It should be kept in mind that this paper is meant only as a brief summary, even an outline, and is not intended to be complete as far as exhausting the subject matter concerned, but only complete as setting forth a general view of a segment of education that is very much in flux, that of foreign language teaching.

Special thanks is due Rev. Oliver Leg Hightower for his aid in the organization of this paper, and Rev. Thomas A. Flynn for his constant guidance in so many trials. Also, I am deeply grateful for the continued confidence of Mr. Daniel Keidel, without whose encouragement this paper would not have been completed.
The purpose of this paper was initially, to give a short synopsis of the history and present situation of language teaching, with a presentation of views as to what the future may bring to language methodology. The general purpose has remained the same through my research, though a second purpose has arisen—that is, a clarification of my own ideas in regard to what specific method is best to use in the classroom in order to convey a totally new language. It is to this end that the latter part of this paper deals with a presentation of the Unity Theory, which though it is by no means a new theory, is an attempt at integration of the good points in the various prevailing methods of modern foreign language teaching.

It should be kept in mind that this paper is meant only as a brief summary, even an outline, and is not intended to be complete as far as exhausting the subject matter concerned, but only complete as setting forth a general view of a segment of education that is very much in flux, that of foreign language teaching.

Special thanks is due Rev. Oliver Lee Hightower for his aid in the organization of this paper, and Rev. Thomas R. Flynn for his constant patience in so many trials. Also, I am deeply grateful for the continued confidence of Mr. Daniel Keldel, without whose encouragement this paper would not have been completed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. HISTORICAL SURVEY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING IN EUROPE SIXTEENTH—NINETEENTH CENTURIES</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE UNITED STATES LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. IMPACT OF THE DIRECT METHOD IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. INFLUENCES ON LANGUAGE TEACHING FROM 1920-1940</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE TEACHING FROM 1940-PRESENT</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. PRESENT SITUATION OF LANGUAGE TEACHING</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. FUTURE TRENDS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. UNITY THEORY</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. ANALYSES OF BEGINNING FRENCH: A CULTURAL APPROACH</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. SUMMARY</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING IN EUROPE

DISTANT-NEIGHBOR CENTURIES

Extensive programs have been undertaken in the last decade to interest students in the study of foreign languages. And these programs have succeeded, paradoxically to the dismay of teachers who can't agree on how to teach the language. Shall we stress the spoken language? Or written? Or culture, or what? This dilemma is, however, certainly not peculiar to our time. And in fact, language teaching began to one decade or even to the twentieth century.

Language, as a means of transferring experience into meaningful symbols, has been around from the time of primitive man's first attempt to communicate out of necessity, and thus too have language learning, and in some form or another, language teaching been with us. Though there was never before such a pronounced conflict between formal methods, some one method has always been dominant, gaining favor or disfavor at a particular time.

The most primitive approach to learning a language is of necessity, direct contact with the language, by the writings or communications in the work, which the person learns through gradual assimilation. This may be called the "natural" method as it is through assimilation that one learns his own native language. The first recorded effects of a forced assimilation were those of a sixteenth century French
CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING IN EUROPE
SIXTEENTH—NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Extensive programs have been undertaken in the last decade to interest students in the study of foreign languages. And these programs have succeeded, paradoxically to the dismay of teachers who can't agree on how to teach the languages. Shall we stress the spoken language? Or written? Or culture, or what? This dilemma is however, certainly not peculiar to one decade nor even to the twentieth century.

Language, as a means of transferring experience into meaningful symbols, has been around from the time of primitive man's first attempt to communicate out of necessity, and thus too have language learning, and in some form or another, language teaching been with us. Though there was never before such a pronounced conflict between formal methods, some one method has always been dominant, gaining favor or disfavor at a particular time.

The most primitive approach to learning a language is of necessity, direct contact with the language, by the writings of Montaigne and Comenius, in his work, "Some Thoughts Concerning Education:" This may be called the "natural" method as it is through assimilation that one learns his own native language. The first recorded effects of a forced assimilation were those of a sixteenth century French
philosopher, Michel de Montaigne, whose father ordered their household in such a way that Latin was the spoken language, in an attempt to teach Michel the Latin language by means of the direct or natural method. The first man to introduce the Direct Method as such, however, was John Amos Comenius. His method was one of direct association between the word and the thing so that the foreign word automatically brought forth the idea of the thing without first being translated through the native language. Comenius' was "the first real attempt made at presenting grammar inductively."1 His method stressed the use of pictures and examples as important in impressing the child. In his book Orbis Sensualium Pictus he stressed the need of repetition and practice rather than memorization of rules and again maintained that the first appeal be to the senses, "that the constant aim must be that the child should see nothing that he could not put a name to and that he should name nothing without being able to point to it."2

John Locke, a seventeenth century empiricist, admits that his theory of language learning was influenced by the writings of Montaigne and Comenius, in his work, Some Thoughts Concerning Education:

2Ibid., p. 4.
...Languages were not made by Rules or Art, but by accident, and the Common Use of the People. And he that will speak them well, has no other Rule but that; nor anything to trust to, but his Memory, and the Habit of Speaking after the Fashion learned from those, that are allowed to speak properly, which in other Words is only to speak by Rote... If Grammar ought to be taught at any time, it must be to one that can speak the Language already; how else can he be taught the Grammar of it? 3

About the mid-eighteenth century, the ideas of Montaigne, Comenius and Locke precipitated in a more widespread and practical application in Europe with the establishment of the Philanthropinum in the principality of Dessau (East Germany) in 1774. The innovator here was a rather unorthodox young German, Johann Bernard Basedow. His system was based on the ideas of Rousseau as set forth in the latter's theory of education in Emile. Emile's education consisted of lessons, each of which had to be an experience of something, not just an abstract idea. This idea of experience was the basis for Basedow's institution in which his aim for teaching languages was to make his students "world citizens," for whom the language would be a useful thing. But Basedow's ideas were unfortunately, as unorthodox as his spirit and so too were the ideas of his predecessors. Education was still steeped in the classical studies of antiquity and thus found

a direct approach to language teaching quite irreconcilable to its formal approach. Thus the doors of the Philanthropinum were barred in 1793, putting an end, for the time being, to the prodigious direct method, and securing the world of education to the scholarly theologians.

Even as Latin was replaced as the vernacular, the formal grammar method was kept and "classical studies were then intended and made to produce an excellent mental discipline, a fortitude of spirit and a broad humane understanding of life." This method remained in Europe throughout the eighteenth century and most of the nineteenth. Its aim of "mental discipline" became almost a vindication for the introduction of modern foreign languages into school curricula. Text books of the time were based on a disciplined grammar with the least amount of oral work possible. Characteristic of this type of writing was that of Karl Plotz who continued the "principle of giving disconnected and isolated sentences illustrative of certain grammatical rules."
CHAPTER II

LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE UNITED STATES
LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Meanwhile, on the American scene, the same atmosphere prevailed as in Europe. Though interest in modern foreign languages in the United States arose "as the natural consequence of the prestige which European thought, learning and literature had gradually gained early in the nineteenth century," it nevertheless took the form of classical studies so that grammar-translation found its method ingrained in American curricula.

A glance at the titles and prefaces of French textbooks published shortly before and directly after the turn of the century in the United States will give a general idea of the scope of the formal grammar method in this country. The four books cited range in copyright dates from the earliest 1869 up to 1918. (Though these are the only books readily available, it is to be expected that others of this same period that were in general use, would follow the same general pattern.)

The earliest text is Magill's French Grammar, copyright 1869. In the Preface, Edward H. Magill

---

discusses the purpose of his Grammar, and most certainly has no problem of choosing between methods—he is all-the-way formal grammar as he explains that:

This Grammar is designed especially for a class-book, and not for a book of reference, and therefore contains only such matter as is to be thoroughly mastered by the student. It aims to exhibit the general principles of the language in rules clearly and concisely stated, and to render these familiar by sufficient illustrations.

...The study of a modern language conducted upon the method here indicated becomes a source of discipline second only to the study of the ancient languages. Of course, it is very desirable that this study should be constantly combined with the oral instruction of a teacher to whom the spoken language is vernacular, or at least familiar. But even without this advantage, the study of a language in the manner above indicated will give the student a far better preparation to become, readily and rapidly, familiar with the spoken language upon visiting France, than he could obtain by those mechanical methods which familiarize him with certain set forms and phrases, but leave him wholly incapable of any independent expression of his own thought.2

Magill’s book reads like a Latin grammar text, the table of contents listing the following: etymology of the noun, adjective, pronoun, etc.; syntax of the noun, adjective, pronoun, etc.; grammatical exercises; and vocabulary. Magill assigns a rather interesting task to the vocabulary section, that being to translate the French words into their Latin equivalents—

"...an exercise exceedingly interesting, and of great service in the acquisition of modern languages..." It seems the times they are a changin'!

The second book, copyright 1884, is Dr. Emil Otto's Conversation-Grammar. Though the title would seem to indicate a more balanced presentation, the format is the same as Magill's, differing only in that a reading, a theme, and a conversation follow each grammar section, all designed to illustrate the previous grammar point. The grammar ranges from the simple articles up through the participle absolute.

Victor Francois' Essentials of French of 1912 again follows the formal grammar method, listing no less than 85 general items of grammar to be mastered by the student. The purpose of the text was to prepare "an attractive, practical, slowly progressive grammar." A quote from Paul Mariéton that becomes the watchword for the whole text, appears on the title page:

> On n'apprend bien une langue qu'en la comparant avec une autre deja connue.

In other words, progress in learning a language is a movement from a known language to the unknown, by a process of comparison and contrast. This idea is in

---

3 Ibid.


5 Ibid., title page.
direct opposition to the prevailing idea that stresses the uniqueness of each language and the fact that languages cannot be "translated" one to another, without the loss of a great deal of meaning.

This next book, though its chief concern is with French verbs, carries through the preceding idea of transference of English words and phrases into supposedly equivalent French words and phrases. Roch-Alphonse de Massabielle, in her book Rapid Method for French Verbs, states: "In applying the method, [grouping verb forms according to a common stem] therefore, ... he [the student] should be asked to translate a variety of English verb forms into French; care being taken in each question to change verb, person and tense."6

Though there seems to be in these texts, some hint of the later trend toward the stress on conversation, nevertheless in the early years of twentieth century America, by and large the dominant theme was still grammar-translation.

---

CHAPTER III

IMPACT OF THE DIRECT METHOD IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

In Europe a growing dissatisfaction with the formal method was beginning to make itself known by 1880. François Gouin, a much inspired Frenchman, loosened the chains of the formal method by a new theory set forth in his *Art d'Enseigner et d'Etudier les Langues*. His theory was based on the psychological elements of association of ideas and mental imagery. Though he has been accused of a rather unorganized oral approach and of an almost mystic sense of intuition in learning, he is nevertheless important for preaching an awareness of the psychological needs of the child. Too, his was the "first attempt to use purposive activity methods..."¹

The impact of Gouin's work, though pushed out of focus for a time, was later to make a grand showing. It remained first for a drastic change in European society to take place. This came about through the industrialization of Europe under the influence of the Industrial Revolution by which the whole economic structure of Europe changed. Science and technology ran rampant in a new world alive with industry and colonialization. In the field of education there was

a growing awareness of the need for science and modern languages that would keep pace with a new European order. Though a bit slower to react, nevertheless began to feel Germany found itself in no way overshadowed as all of Europe joined in the grand march of commerce and industry. Taking a position of leadership, it is no surprise that Germany gave the first cry for reform in the field of modern language teaching. From Vilhelm Vištor, at the University of Liverpool came a blistering attack of Karl Plötz' method—actually a stark denunciation of the whole atmosphere of grammar-translation, written in his Der Sprachunterricht Muss Umkehren. His approach, as the title of this work indicates, was a complete reversal of the grammar method—he emphasized the spoken language and cut straight and deep into the heart of grammar-translation. Grammar, according to Vištor, should be learned inductively and translation was a skill that followed only from previous mastery of the language. Spurred on by a rising enthusiasm for the new method, Hölzel and Alge, in 1885 and 1887 respectively, popularized the use of visual aids with the issuance of wall pictures of the seasons, city life, etc. to be used in conjunction with the language textbook. This new Direct Method took hold in an almost unbelievably short time and soon dominated the whole European language setting. Speech was considered of primary importance, with the use of pictures and
illustrations an integral part of presentation, and a complete banishment of the native tongue. The United States, though a bit slower to react, nevertheless began to feel the influence of the Direct Method. Textbooks of the early 1900's began to interject speech as an important element in language learning, even to the point of calling it the most important element. Fraser and Squair's *New Complete French Grammar*, copyright 1921, as a revision of a 1901 edition, indicates the changes that were taking place at this time. The text still follows a grammar format, but is so designed as an attempt "...in accordance with advanced methods of teaching, to provide an abundant and varied apparatus for oral practice and for training in accuracy of pronunciation, in writing from dictation, and in composition... In fact it is everywhere emphasized throughout the book that learning to speak the language is of prime importance."²

With similar objectives, *A First French Course* by Louis A. Roux, A.B., was published in 1923. The text's aim is set forth in the preface, as the author states:

...An advocate of the Direct Method in a modified form, he [the author] has introduced into this book many devises that will make it possible to use French in the class from the very beginning of the course... presenting a minimum amount of grammar and vocabulary, and a maximum of drill...

...Emphasis is laid on language rather than on grammar.

...The spoken language is emphasized throughout the course. Various devices are used for oral practice, as, for instance, the questionnaire, the expressions for classroom use, the series of actions, the French names for grammatical terms, the direct method exercise, the use of phonetics, etc. 3

The apparent success of the Direct Method was due in actuality to the enthusiasm with which the method was defended and the newness and excitement it brought to the students. With the recognition of this fact and the fact that the students were not progressing as first thought, the Direct Method lost those advocates first of all, who were dubious of the method to begin with, and even lost some of those who previously had put much confidence in the method. Those who held to the grammar-translation felt quite secure in that, language teaching, they felt, would eventually come back to the one safe, tried and tested method. And this it did, but reluctantly, and with a great desire to find out why the Direct Method had failed. In the interval between the Wars, linguists and educators began serious scientific work in the field of oral-aural teaching and did manage to clear away some of the haze surrounding language teaching, though, as will be seen shortly, in the last few years the haze has again been fast approaching.

CHAPTER IV

INFLUENCES ON LANGUAGE TEACHING FROM 1920-1940

The situation of language teaching in the United States in the interim of the Wars, presents an especially nebulous picture. After the Direct Method proved a disappointment to so many educators hopeful of settling the question of methodology, there appeared theories, theories and more theories, some proposing new methods, others reiterating the virtues of the old stand-by methods. The actual teaching of languages became then, of necessity, quite a subjective affair. The individual teacher was forced to adopt some method, or a hodgepodge of methods, just to keep the class going. Thus, linguists were finally faced with a concrete problem—speculation and theorizing were ineffective. What was needed was a thorough analyzation of the problem and the presentation of some kind of workable solution.

The methods that were predominant before the twentieth century and those that have come into use since the turn of the century, have not just happened but have been influenced by many things. As Robert L. Politzer of Stanford University points out in an article from the Modern Language Journal of March, 1964, the three most obvious influences are (1) the current linguistic theory, (2) the contemporary stand on educational psychology, and (3) the attitude at the
time toward international communication.

It was the dominant theory of linguistics that, as has been seen, affected language teaching especially during the nineteenth century and all the time previous to the twentieth century. As was pointed out, for centuries, the ultimate justification and aim of language teaching was based on the idea of the identity between grammatical and logical categories. Grammar was seen as logic in reference to language. Thus universal grammatical categories provided the methodology of the grammar-translation approach. This was based on the idea "that the method of expressing thought and ideas in a foreign language started with the grammatical analysis of the parallel statement in the native language."¹ Thus the logical categories were seen to be universal and could provide a means of almost word for word translation from one language to another. For example, "the girl is pretty," would be broken down into subject, verb, and predicate adjective and merely transferred into the same categories in another language, as la fille est joli and la muchacha es bonita. This logical transference became almost an obsession and the new language, the language to be learned, came second in importance. Following upon this transfer theory, Mr. Politzer indicates several

other objectives as, to make the student think, and to make the student aware of the logical categories in English.

With the onset of the twentieth century, and the widespread interest in educational psychology, linguistics moved away from the grammar-translation method, as a reaction against the theory of "formal discipline" that held that study in one field strengthened the mind's faculties for proficiency in another, as, the memory could be improved for say, history, through memory work in languages. The mere possibility of transfer of training had by 1925 been so scrutinized that educators could no longer find any justification for teaching languages on the grounds that they helped the student "think."

Though educational psychology was coming into its own and indeed affecting language teaching, it was not strong enough by itself to completely eradicate grammar-translation, at least not until after the 30's. The status of foreign languages in schools of the 1920's and 30's assumed that of (pardon the most misused phrase) "dead languages." Languages were not pushed and often the high school student began the study of a language only to drop it after a year or two. And why not, for even the college bound student was aware that the language requirement for him would be, at the most, two years. Too, the offerings in the field of languages were limited mainly to French, Spanish,
German, Greek and sometimes, Italian—or if others were offered, there were hardly enough interested students to warrant a class. Thus, the most characteristic element of language teaching during this time being grammar-translation, the student memorized rules by which he could transform English sentences into supposedly equivalent French sentences, and learned how to read French, translating it, more often than not, word for word, into English.

Since the impact of educational psychology was not enough to overthrow this element of grammar-translation, it remained in the schools and actually seemed perfectly proper as the method needed to obtain the one important objective—that of gaining a reading knowledge of the language. And even though educators by 1925 doubted the worth of the transfer theory of learning, nevertheless, William G. Moulton in an article reprinted from Trends in European and American Linguistics, makes clear that in actual practice, the value of learning a language was measured by its power of transfer to other fields, as with Latin which was supposed to give rise to "logical thinking" and a better knowledge of English grammar, or as with French, the learning of which was supposed to indicate a certain culture status, or German, which was termed useful in the sciences as many important scientific works were at that time written and previously had been written in German.
What it finally took to bring language teaching into the forum of a changing society was a greater confidence in the findings of educational psychology combined with an awareness of the need for international communication. That this need had been recognized even before the twentieth century, it is true; there were those few educators, perhaps a bit more far-sighted and internationally minded, who were already pushing the audio-lingual or natural method of teaching. Here, emphasis was placed on acquisition of lingual skill and cultural enrichment as the main objectives. But these few men, such as J. J. Bovee, F. B. de Sauzée and A. A. Méras were ahead of their time with such ideas of international involvement, for the United States was not ready to embark on losses across the seas, when the time was right for gains on her own native soil.

During the 30's, however, with the further development of linguistics, the audio-lingual method came to the surface out of a two-fold necessity: first, because of the very nature of linguistics and its emphasis on form and sound; and secondly due to the influence of behavioristic psychology, and its emphasis on habit formation and stimulus-response.²

² It seems here that there is the basis for a present day criticism of the audio-lingual method, that structure is stressed to the complete loss of memory.
CHAPTER V

CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE TEACHING FROM 1940-PRESENT

By the 1940's the linguistic impact was felt through the establishment of such organizations as the Intensive Language Program of the American Council of Learned Societies, which concerned itself with the oral approach directed toward practical situations. This was carried out through the "mim-men" approach—mimicry and memorization. (An interesting note here is that the teaching of English was more varied, in that it was based on grammar and included pronunciation, structure, vocabulary and pattern practice.)

Since 1945 those who advocate this "international sense of communication" hinted at before the turn of the century, have been most influential in establishing the audio-lingual approach as the method of teaching foreign languages. The method was first used in colleges, and based on the aforementioned mim-men approach rather than pattern practice approach. Textbooks following upon the method were filled with dialogue memorization. The implementation of the audio-lingual approach from colleges to high schools has changed the approach somewhat, in adding to it; thus the method is a combination of the mim-men—memorization of dialogues—and pattern practices, to aid understanding of structure and increase the students' facility to build on the patterns.

\footnote{Folitzer, loc. cit.}
CHAPTER I

PRESENT SITUATION OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

With a view of the history of language teaching clearly in mind, it will be well to check the present situation to see how well the audio-lingual method is working in actual practice and then to take a quick glimpse at a possible future trend.

"The thesis and antithesis of language instruction obviously are the traditional method of language teaching and the relatively new audio-lingual technique." The latter would seem to be the antithesis, at least chronologically, but actually it is the thesis. The audio-lingual approach has been around just long enough to begin hearing criticism from those in favor of the grammar-translation method, and even from former advocates of the new method.

The criticism against the new method is directed toward several bad effects--those of monotony of repetition and the emphasis on memory to the neglect of other skills, especially grammatical construction. Special criticism has been directed to the almost "religious" use of the language laboratory as some sort of magical device that automatically imparts the essence and proficiency of a language to the student who sits in a booth awaiting "instant language." To

---

CHAPTER I
PRESENT SITUATION OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

With a view of the history of language teaching clearly in mind, it will be well to check the present situation to see how well the audio-lingual method is working in actual practice and then to take a quick glimpse at a possible future trend.

"The thesis and antithesis of language instruction obviously are the traditional method of language teaching and the relatively new audio-lingual technique."1 The latter would seem to be the antithesis, at least chronologically, but actually it is the thesis. The audio-lingual approach has been around just long enough to begin drawing criticism from those in favor of the grammar-translation method, and even from former advocates of the new method.

The criticism against the new method is directed toward several bad effects—those of monotony of repetition and the emphasis on mimicry to the neglect of other skills, especially grammatical construction. Special criticism has been directed to the almost "religious" use of the language laboratory as some sort of magical devise that automatically imparts the essence and proficiency of a language to the student who sits in a booth awaiting "instant language." To

---
combat a fanaticism of this type, the criticism must surely be justified. In any event, it did awaken educators on both sides to the possibility of the audio-lingual approach being stamped the mean when in actuality it was tending toward a rather ridiculous extreme.

But as there has been due criticism against the new methodology, there has also been much undeserved criticism, leading some teachers to the opposite extreme of complete abandonment of the method. As D.C. Hawley points out in "In Search of a Synthesis," the learning of a new language necessarily involves a good deal of work, for it is no less than the acquisition of a skill. If the teacher is therefore hard-pressed and finds the audio-lingual approach taxing her energies, she must know that any skill is got at a price. Too, the student must beware lest he become disgusted with having to concentrate or memorize or mimick. The grammar-translation method, as I recall from my Latin days, wasn't all "fun and games" either!

As for the true merits of the language laboratory, it must be said that this device certainly has an important place, though not one of divine magnitude. The laboratory certainly helps to fill in for the lack of teachers who can personally tutor the students, and provides true initial sounds, where the teacher might be a bit uncertain of pronunciation.

Finally, there is the criticism against the audio-
lingual approach that time spent in repetition-imitation is time lost for learning anything about the country itself—its culture, literature, and history. This has happened in some cases, but not due to an inherent weakness in the method itself. Rather it is due to a strict valuation of the new method as the only method with no limitations or drawbacks. The audio-lingual approach can implement the acquisition of passive skills as it is the basis for the acquisition of active skills; but traditional elements of grammar and translation must be brought in for their own merits and to counterbalance the deficiencies of the new approach.

One of which the student is exposed to drills given generally by a native speaker, is given opportunity to record and correct his own voice in comparison to the native speaker, and most basically, is allowed to proceed at his own rate. Linguistics naturally turns to this programming as both tend to reduce language to its minimal form and build from then.

Another current trend that in actuality is a bit of a "back-up" is the theory of transformational grammar. One point is chosen, one basic structure, that can be shown to spiral into all other phases of grammar. Coming from Robert Pfalzenz, "...we can predict that the concern with transformational grammar—coming as it does at a time in which self-instruction and programmed learning are also an important interest—will lead within the next ten to fifteen years to the
As for the future, there would seem to be an unlimited number of possible directions language teaching might follow. With the tremendous impact of linguistics in recent years and its emphasis on reducing language to its simplest forms, it comes as no surprise that one particular method is gaining increasing favor in high schools, and that is a set-up of programmed self-instruction. Under this set-up the language laboratory is of the utmost importance in providing means by which the student is exposed to drills given generally by a native speaker, is given opportunity to record and correct his own voice in comparison to the native speaker, and most basically, is allowed to proceed at his own rate. Linguistics naturally turns to this programming as both tend to reduce language to its minimal forms and build from them.

Another current trend that in actuality is a bit of a "back-up" is the theory of transformational grammar. One point is chosen, one basic structure, that can be shown to spiral into all other phases of grammar. Coming from Robert Politzer, "...we can predict that the concern with transformational grammar--coming as it does at a time in which self-instruction and programmed learning are also an important interest--will lead within the next ten to fifteen years to the
creation of more teaching materials, characterized by extremely careful step by step presentation of grammatical structures."¹

Politzer further makes the statement that perhaps could be a guideline to any future direction language teaching might take—and this in reference to the influence of the individual teacher:

Linguistics and educational psychology are not and should not be the forces which actively shape language teaching methodology, but rather the tools which the language teacher uses to create and validate his methods.²


² Ibid.
PART III

UNITY THEORY

With the foregoing brief exposition of the history and present situation of language teaching it is quite clear that the position of language methodology is not at all clear. Methods have moved from a very unorthodox oral approach before the turn of the century, to a more conservative, traditional approach between the two World Wars, and back to the oral approach with the onset of World War II and the influence of a sense of internationalism. Finally, the present status of language teaching is very conservatively speaking, that of great flux. There are those linguists who herald the oral-aural a mission, here to save language teaching from the static traditional method. And there are those, only a few I imagine, who fall to the opposite extreme of clinging to the grammar-translation method at all costs. And yet it is between these two extremes that most modern language teachers find themselves—a not too enviable position. Thus it is that the majority try to maintain the effective elements in both approaches, but I am afraid, with only a vague notion of why. That is, it seems that a great number of language teachers fall to this method and that one of the various trends popularize, but never really clarity in their own minds any real objectives that would give definite direction to what-
CHAPTER I

UNITY THEORY

With the foregoing brief exposition of the history and present situation of language teaching it is quite clear that the position of language methodology is not at all clear. Methods have moved from a very unorthodox oral approach before the turn of the century, to a conservative, traditional approach between the two World Wars, and back to the oral approach with the onset of World War II and the influence of a sense of internationalism. Finally, the present status of language teaching is very conservatively speaking, that of great flux. There are those linguists who herald the oral-aural system as a messiah, here to save language teaching from the static traditional method. And there are those, only a few I imagine, who fall to the opposite extreme of clinging to the grammar-translation method at all costs. And yet it is between these two extremes that most modern language teachers find themselves—a not too enviable position. Thus it is that the majority try to maintain the effective elements in both approaches, but I am afraid, with only a vague notion of why. That is, it seems that a great number of language teachers fall to this method and that one as the various trends popularize, but never really clarify in their own minds any real objectives that would give unity and direction to what—
ever method they did choose. Though it may be difficult to make such a clarification in view of so much uncertainty in the whole field of language teaching, and though objectives may be changed (and certainly they will be to some degree), a clarification must nevertheless be made before the teacher enters his classroom. He must know where he is leading his students if they are expected to follow. Disorganization on the teacher's part—and this is meant in particular to the working out of general objectives in the teacher's mind, as well as daily lesson plans—is quickly felt by the students and can only lead on the student's part to confusion and inability to relate each day's work.

There is a difficulty that comes to mind in formulating general objectives and that is the fact of the great variety of objectives found among the students themselves in one class. Take for example a first year French class consisting of high school sophomores, juniors and seniors: there will be some who are merely fulfilling their language requirement perhaps in preparation for college; others desire to secure a reading knowledge of French, possibly as a culture symbol; and still others may seek a real ability to communicate by means of the language. This situation is not at all uncommon and at first glance a solution seems almost impossible. Add to this the varying degrees of ability (and inability!) that the
students possess for grasping and handling any language, and the situation becomes a real dilemma. There is a temptation of sorts for the teacher to adapt his method and speed of presentation to the brighter students, and then attempt a program of "special help" for the others. Admittedly this may be justified in certain cases, but it most assuredly cannot be taken as a guide rule.

A safe direction in solving this dilemma would seem to be taking the middle-ground—safe, not in the sense of the "easiest way out," but in the sense of freedom to teach the language as an integrated whole, "safe" from wavering between objectives. Suggesting the middle-ground may perhaps connote the idea of making concessions, of being afraid to take a stand; but on the contrary this middle-ground is very firm, with quite definite and organized objectives.

Just what is this middle-ground and what are its objectives? The most fundamental idea here is to teach the language as a unity, not just the grammar, nor just vocabulary, but the language itself. To some this Unity Theory may seem only an escape mechanism to avoid going very deeply into any one aspect of the language. I question whether a profound treatment of any one aspect is desirable in a beginning class—this is not to say that skimming over everything is better than really learning one thing. But it should be remembered that in any beginning
course the aim must be a general, not to be confused with shoddy, knowledge of the basics before the students will have the capacity or desire to delve deeper into the subject.

As it is often difficult to visualize abstract objectives, the following diagram is given in an attempt to illustrate the Unity Theory as it would apply to teaching the French language.

---

The diagram shows the unity theory as it would apply to teaching the French language. The lines indicate the necessity of unity in the language, as the elements of the language are to be understood as distinct but not separate; in other words, the various aspects of speaking, reading, writing, etc., are not independent, yet they form one whole, the French language.
The first point in explanation of the diagram is that the French language is purposely enclosed in a circle, the symbol of unity. The various lines of contact pointing to the language indicate its necessary unity, achieved by the six media of speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, culture, and appreciation of the English language. (The order here is an arrangement according to the sequence of beginning each element and does not indicate that one element must be mastered before another is begun.) But notice too that the lines of contact, bearing the same media, also point to an underlying element of grammar. That is, grammar is to be integrated in all the other elements which eventually lead to the unity of the language. The lines do not converge in the circle because the elements of the language are to be understood as distinct, but not separate; in other words, the various aspects of speaking, reading, writing, etc. are unlike the others, they are individuals, yet they form the one whole of the French language.
CHAPTER II

ANALYZATION OF BEGINNING FRENCH: A CULTURAL APPROACH

Though the preceding Unity Theory may in fact be the same notion held by the majority of language teachers who find themselves caught between the traditional method and the oral-aural approach, it is nevertheless just a theory. This may be the reason why so many teachers fail in front of the classroom—even though they may have a very clear notion of their objectives, the notion is pure theory that seems to fall apart in practice. But it need not be so, if the teacher has access to a very important device—quite simply, I refer here to a reliable textbook that stresses unity as its basic objective, not just learning about the language, but learning the language. Emphasizing the need for this type of textbook does not in the least diminish the need for the teacher's personal qualifications such as personality, which is an invaluable asset in language teaching, acquaintance with the subject matter, inventiveness, and adaptability to the situation at hand, for a good textbook in the hands of a poor teacher is at best an unfortunate predicament.

The textbook that best illustrates the objectives of the preceding Unity Theory in regard to the French language, is William Hendrix' and Walter Melden's Beginning French: A Cultural Approach. The following analysis according to approach, purpose and format
should clarify even further this idea of the need for presenting a language as a basic unity.

First, as a cultural approach, the book suggests four fundamental ideas as stressed by the authors:

1. The reading material contained should be meaningful and interesting.
2. The course should give the student an appreciation of the country.
3. Learning the language should be emphasized. Grammar is not to be treated as a separate study.
4. The language to be learned should be used in the activities.

The idea is to give the student an understanding of the language in all its aspects, using history, geography, and life and customs as the basis for conversation, reading selections, vocabulary and grammar. The approach then is an attempt at presenting the language as a whole.

Secondly, the purpose of the text is to give the student a real working knowledge of the French language—

Beginning French thus appears to be extremely well
arranged and if carefully handled by an alert teacher, could fulfill the purposes set forth by the authors.

and the objectives of the Unit Scheme. Though the book is intended as a college text, with some adjustments, it could be quite suitable for high school. If utilised in all its potential, Beginning French could bring the students very close to the ideal of really learning the language in all its aspects.

Thirdly, concerning the format, *Beginning French* is divided into a section of sixty lessons, followed by grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary sections. After each five lessons there is a revision containing exercises in review of the preceding chapters. After each ten lessons there is a supplement containing vocabulary and exercises (from English to French) pertaining to each lesson. Each lesson is divided as follows:

1. a reading section pertaining to some aspect of geography, history, culture or the life of the French
2. a set of questions about the reading
3. a set of exercises, using vocabulary and constructions found in the reading
4. a conversation exercise
5. a notation of the vocabulary to be found in the supplement
6. questions on grammar points to be found in the Grammaire following all sixty lessons

*Beginning French* thus appears to be extremely well arranged and if carefully handled by an alert teacher, could fulfill the purposes set forth by the authors, and the objectives of the Unity Theory. Though the book is intended as a college text, with proper adjustments, it could be quite suitable for high school. If utilized in all its potential, *Beginning French* could bring the students very close to the ideal of really learning the language in all its aspects.
CHAPTER III

SUMMARY

It is hoped that this paper may provide some clarification as to the situation of modern foreign language teaching today. The brief history presented was necessary in that knowledge of the present can only be incomplete and prejudiced, unless it is knowledge gained through consideration of past factors of influence. With the status of many methods of language teaching so uncertain, it may be hard to see the connection between the past and the present and the implications the past has for the future, but an historical analysis is at least a beginning.

The consideration of the present situation was not lengthy due to the fact that to attempt even a survey of all the different methods, those yet in theory and those in actual practice, would consume volumes. There, the attention was given to criticisms of the new methodology as meaning the oral-aural approach in opposition to approaches based more on grammar. Speculation for the future must necessarily be brief if one is to concentrate on a positive program for the present. Thus, the idea of the Unity Theory was that of a positive program, an attempt at a compromise between the meritorious elements of many methods.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Reprints

