



Second language teaching and learning

Aim:

- To develop an understanding of second language teaching pedagogy in order to inform your own second language learning and second language Welsh teaching practice.

By discussing:

- factors which interact with second language learning outcomes
- types of Welsh language provision
- criticism levelled against Welsh second language education
- the two major second language teaching paradigms (structural and communicative)

Second Language Learning

Defining Fluency

Learning Styles

Age:
Critical Period Hypothesis

Language Status:
Minority vs Majority

Learner Characteristics

Intelligence / Aptitude

Learning context:
Learning vs Acquisition

Motivation and Attitudes:
Intrinsic / Extrinsic



A Typology of Bilingual Education

In between basically monolingual Welsh and monolingual English schools in Wales, there is the widest variety of practice of bilingual education. The kaleidoscopic variety of bilingual education practice in Wales makes the production of a simple typology inherently dangerous (Baker, 1993, t.15).

What type of bilingual practice are you aware of?

1. Immersion Education
2. Maintenance / Heritage
3. Mainstream (English Medium Schools)

Estyn Annual Review 2010/11: *Many pupils do not plan jointly to ensure language progress. Too much use is made of writing frames that do not develop their Welsh language skills. Pupils work on their own too often and resources are used independently. Examples of pupils making progress are given.*

Estyn Annual Report

Estyn Annual Review 2012/13: Too often, teachers increase bilingual sentence patterns and vocabulary from scratch but often repeat sentence patterns and vocabulary from scratch. The Group believes that it is preferable for the focus groups, pupils noted that they dislike the second language at Key Stages 3 and 4:...

What is the common underlying theme?

We do the same topics every year.... It's repetitive.

We do the same topics every year. As we were studying Welsh as a second language through the medium of Welsh. In this group, it was amongst those pupils with very little contact with the language that they suggested that their failure to speak (and, in some cases, understand) the language was an overemphasis on learning vocabulary and a lack of emphasis on learning communication skills in a more meaningful context.

The difference between Approach and Method!

Approach

Approach is an umbrella term. It refers to a set of correlative assumptions, beliefs and theories based on the nature of language and the nature of language learning and teaching.

Method

The term Method refers to the way an Approach is put into practice in the classroom.

Structural Approach

- 1920s onwards
- Behavioural psychology and structural linguistics
- Behaviourist theory (imitation, practice and reinforcement of habit formation)
- Structural linguists (scientifically graded structures)

Methods and Characteristics of the Structural Approach

Methods:

- Audiolingual Method
- Situational Language Teaching Method
- Oral Situational Language Teaching Method

- Focus on oral practice
- P-P-P cycle
 - Presentation
 - Production
 - Practice
- Emphasis on correctness
- Teacher control
- Oral drilling and controlled practice such as question and answer, memorisation and substitution drills
- Focus on the four discrete skills
- No attention to target language culture.

Limitations of the Structural Approach

- Transfer of discrete structures to communication
- Artificial and repetitive
- Noam Chomsky's *Universal Grammar Theory*
 - Competence and Performance
 - Ben sandwich had a for lunch
 - Small red cows sleep in trees in the sky
 - Your turn!!



You want someone in your classroom to close a window.
How many different ways can this be expressed?

Alternative Methods Background:

- Suggestopedia / Desuggestopedia
- The Silent Way
- Community Language Learning
- Natural Language Approach
- Total Physical Response

Whilst these methods vary significantly in their application they all aim to reduce anxiety and stress in the language learner. Emphasis is often placed on receptive skills over productive skills during the early stages of language learning. These methods remained in the community and were not adopted by mainstream schools.

Early Communicative Language Teaching

- Communicative Competence

A speaker's internal linguistic understanding and the ability to use language appropriately and convey a message in a variety of social contexts

- Functional and communicative purpose of language

- Communicative proficiency over mastery of structures

- Important developments:

- Focus on meaning

- Contextualisation

- Toleration of errors

Current Communicative Language Teaching

A Principled Approach

1. Meaningful and purposeful communication
2. Content
3. Integrated language skills
4. Metalinguistic knowledge
5. Trial and error
6. Learner focused
7. Teacher as facilitator
8. Collaboration

Understanding Accuracy vs Fluency Tasks

Characteristics of activities focusing on fluency

- Reflect natural use of language
- Focus on achieving communication
- Require meaningful use of language
- Require the use of communication strategies
- Produce language that may not be predictable
- Seek to link language use to context

Characteristics of activities focusing on accuracy

- Reflect classroom use of language
- Focus on the formation of correct examples of language
- Practice language out of context
- Practice small samples of language
- Do not require meaningful communication
- Control choice of language

Littlewood's Task Continuum

Focus on Form		Focus on Meaning		
Non-communicative Learning	Pre-communicative language practice	Communicative language practice	Structured communication	Authentic communication
Focusing on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean. <i>e.g. substitution exercises, 'discovery' and awareness-raising activities</i>	Practising language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others, <i>e.g. 'question-and-answer' practice.</i>	Practising pre-taught language in context where it communicates new information. <i>e.g. information-gap activities or 'personalized' questions</i>	Using language to communicate in situations which elicit pre-learnt language, but with some unpredictability. <i>e.g. structured role-play and simple problem-solving</i>	Using language to communicate in situations where the meanings are unpredictable. <i>e.g. creative role-play, more complex problem solving and discussions/debates</i>
Exercise		Tasks		
Enabling Tasks		Communicative Tasks		

Current Second Language Programmes Based on principles of Communicative Language Teaching

- Immersion education
- Task based learning
- Content based language learning

Am I providing an opportunity for children to produce language that may not be predictable?

Does the language I'm presenting reflect natural use of language (as opposed to classroom contrived)?

Am I placing too much emphasis on vocabulary?

Are the children producing a wide range of language structures?

Do I provide opportunities for non linguistic outcomes?

Am I nurturing their cultural identity?

Am I placing too much emphasis on one language structure / question and answer?

Recap

- Factors which influence second language learning outcomes
- Bilingual provision in Wales
- Structural approach
- Early communicative approach
- Current communicative approach
- Accuracy vs Fluency
- Littlewood's Task Continuum

Bibliography and further reading

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