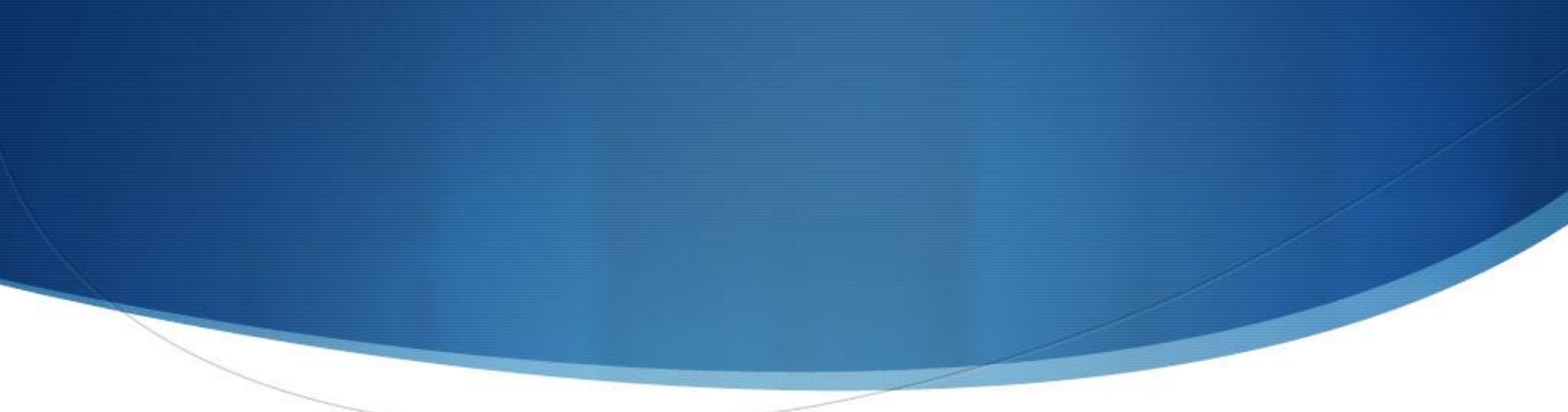


Current Communicative Approaches to Teaching Language



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- ◆ Thinking back over your course so far, what have you learnt as ‘teachers of language’ in the primary sector?
 - ◆ What experience do you have of language teaching and learning?
 - ◆ Discuss in your group, noting any examples that you’ve observed or been a part of possibly as a learner. You could draw on your experience as pupils or students on PTE.

‘Incidental Language’

- ◆ ‘Incidental teaching’ is a process of transferring language through labelling and describing in natural adult-child interactions
- ◆ Consider the difference between ‘incidental’ learning and ‘intentional’ learning
- ◆ Jan H. Hulstijn



(Schmidt 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025), input processing (Van Patten 1992, Van Patten and Cadierno 1994), preliminary intake and final intake (Chaudron 1985), uptake (Allwright 1984, Slimani 1987, 1992), language awareness (James and Garrett 1991).

Schmidt (1995: 5) has successfully stressed the importance of awareness in language learning, clarifying the issue by addressing the following questions:

- 1) Can there be learning without intention (that is, incidental learning)?
- 2) Can there be learning without attention or noticing?
- 3) Can there be learning without understanding (that is, implicit learning)?

The answer to the first question is clearly affirmative in the case of child language acquisition. Children acquire the grammar of their language unconsciously, that is incidentally, as a by-product of communication and socialization (Schmidt 1993: 208). However, in the case of adult language learning, evidence from psychological experiments shows that when a task does not focus attention on what needs to be learned, intentional learning may be superior. In such a case the motivation to learn may lead to the adoption of effective cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Pintrich 1989). In second language learning, in spite of Krashen's evidence supporting incidental learning, the findings of most controlled studies have

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.

(An 'approach' reflects a 'philosophy'.)

Method

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

Today, we shall be
considering in some
detail approaches
and methods for
teaching language.



- ◆ In his chapter 'Dulliau Dysgu a'r Dosbarth Iaith', language methodology expert, Dr Emyr Davies, makes a key point when he states that **there is no such as thing as a 'single perfect method'** (*Cyfoethogi'r Cyfathrebu*, Jones, C. a Morris, S: 1).
- ◆ Teachers need to have *a repertoire* of methods from which they can adapt the best one to teach the pupils in their care
- ◆ Over the next few slides, we shall consider some of the methods (and approaches) we can adopt...

LANGUAGE IMMERSION

- ◆ Most common approach in Welsh Medium Schools
- ◆ In this method, children reach the Foundation Phase and Pupils are immersed in the language of the school, i.e. Welsh, regardless of their home language
- ◆ Teachers and Assistants speak Welsh all day, and the teaching activities are presented and performed through the medium of Welsh, each pupil is encouraged to express his/herself in Welsh
- ◆ English is used for clarification.

GRAMMAR METHOD

- ◆ derived from an understanding of the ‘system’ of the language in question
- ◆ divided into a set of grammatical rules that can be used as building blocks.
- ◆ These blocks are analysed and the observed rules are explained and taught.
- ◆ Many years ago, this was the only method used in secondary schools where Latin and Greek was taught in order to *read* literary texts rather than to be *spoken*. This method has lost popularity in recent years, though it has many excellent features.

DIRECT METHOD

- ◆ The **Direct Method** came into being as a reaction to the *grammar* method
- ◆ The teacher avoids all explanations and aims to teach through pictures and gestures alone
- ◆ The emphasis is entirely on using the new language (the 'target language') as a medium.

Do you know what this is?



AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD

- ◆ The **audio-lingual method** has been very influential
- ◆ It's based on imitation and drilling
- ◆ It's similar to *the direct method*, where the emphasis is on speaking a language and using the target language as a medium, but it also aims to draw attention to the difference between the first language and new language
- ◆ Teacher's main role is as 'drill master', encouraging the whole class to repeat one pattern before asking individuals to repeat it, before then moving on to the next pattern
- ◆ As the name suggests, the emphasis is entirely on listening and speaking.

SITUATIONAL METHOD

- ◆ The **situational method** is to some extent a variation on the *audio-lingual* method
- ◆ In this method, the situation is presented through small extracts of dialogue, and the pupils are requested to learn these extracts by heart. The problem with this method is that it doesn't pay enough attention to the fact that language patterns belong to many situations, and pupils find that often they cannot transfer the patterns from one situation to the next. At its extreme and least effective end, pupils taught via this method could be able to order a cup of coffee but not a train ticket.

COMMUNICATIVE METHODS

- ◆ From around 1970 onwards, a 'revolution' in the way teachers taught languages was seen, as a range of **Communicative Methods** were introduced
- ◆ These methods remain popular today
- ◆ As 'communicating' requires 'interaction' between people the lessons are structured so that they offer an opportunity for pupils to develop their oral language skills
- ◆ The best examples of these methods draw attention to language patterns and often build on these patterns through a range of 'games' or 'pair' and 'group' work.
- ◆ Can you think of examples that you've observed in school or University?

TASK

What are some advantages and limitations of pair and group work in the language classroom?



Jack Richards

- "Generous in sharing his expertise with junior members of the profession, unstinting in his efforts to promote excellent language teaching in all parts of the world, indefatigable in showing the applications of theory to teaching practice in the classroom, Dr. Richards is a fine example of what English language education and applied linguistics can accomplish."

• <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URpjAcs9fy0>

Current Communicative Language Teaching

(sometimes known as the *Principled Approach*)

The Principles:

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

TASK-BASED LEARNING METHODS

- ◆ **Task-based learning** methods aims to ensure that the lessons are totally relevant to the specific needs of the learners, so that they can see a value in learning the language in order to complete the task
- ◆ The key is to choose tasks that are relevant to the whole class and encourage them to put the task in action in the 'real' world beyond the confines of the language class room.

Task-Based Learning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfPrGTNrRNc>



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
- Tolerance for errors

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

TASK

Can you give examples of activities which aim to develop *fluency* and activities which aim to develop *accuracy*?

Discuss the following questions based on lesson that you've taught or observed being taught in school

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

3. Do I provide opportunities for non linguistic outcomes?

2. Am I placing too much emphasis on vocabulary?

4. Am I nurturing their cultural identity?

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

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

7. Are the children producing a wide range of language structures?

Bibliography and Further Reading

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