

# JET SDC 2016 Workshop: „Trading Places” & An Introduction to General Theories of Foreign Language Learning and Acquisition”

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## 1) Major methods and approaches to language teaching in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### 1.1) The 4 language skills

- Constantly changing society in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century → methods of foreign language lessons began to change ('old languages' (Greek & Latin) were replaced with 'new/living languages' (English & French))
- **4 essential skills** in language learning are listening, reading, writing and speaking

	Receptive	productive
Aural	Listening	Speaking
Graphics	Reading	Writing

### 1.2) The main foreign-language teaching methods

#### 1.2.1) The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM)

- derived from traditional method of teaching Latin & Greek at public schools, originated in Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- students are taught to translate from one language to another → **Grammar is taught deductively**
- students memorize native-language equivalents for target-language vocabulary
- major focus is given on Reading and Writing (Graphics)
- accuracy is emphasized and instructions are given in student's native language
- use of authentic texts (belletrist) to cultivate students' general mental discipline<sup>1</sup>

- easiest approach to instruct foreign-language classes, especially with limited foreign language competences (speaking abilities), ergo class will usually be held in students' mother tongue
- Graphics skills > Aural skills (mostly in the context of translations)
- scholars already criticized this method for "its obscure rules [...] and the total loss of genuine feeling for the language<sup>2</sup>", because it didn't appeal to students needs to speak the language outside the classroom
- this unpopular approach has been rejected by most modern scholars today; unfortunately, its modified form is still used in some parts of the world<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.2.2) The Direct Method

- inspired by Wilhelm Viëtor, a German teacher in England and the initiator of the late 19th century Reform Movement in modern language teaching
- instructions in the target language: "foreign language should always be spoken in class"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Larsen-Freeman (2000), p. 17 f., Richards/Rodgers (2005), p. 5 f.

<sup>2</sup> Howatt/Johnson (2001), p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Richards/Rodgers (2005), p.6.

- oral communication organized in question-and-answer exchanges within a small group of teacher and students; compared to GTM → within this approach **grammar is taught inductively**
- vocabulary is taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures or by association of ideas
- correct pronunciation is emphasized
- teachers can be native speakers or have nativelylike fluency in the target language
- this approach is still used for example at 'Berlitz schools<sup>5</sup>' around the world<sup>6</sup>

- success of this approach depends on the personality of the teacher and their ability to explain (abstract) things by using gestures and target language
- Aural skills > Graphic skills; students should learn the grammar by themselves
- criticized because of long explanations to avoid mother language

#### 1.2.3) The Audiolingual & Audio-visual Method

- very popular approach in the 1950s & 60s (ties to linguistic and behavioural psychology)
- new media (tape & disk recorders, video film etc.) have been introduced in FLC<sup>7</sup> → target language presented in spoken then in written form (Listening skill)
- students learn to use L2 (target language) communicatively and to produce error-free utterances
- pattern drills: focus on accuracy through drill and practice the basic structures and sentence patterns of the target language → very little use of mother tongue by the teacher<sup>8</sup>

- introduction of new elements (media) marks a milestone within FLC
- Receptive skills > Productive skills (pattern drills)
- scholars widely rejected this approach because pattern drill paradigms 1) prevents learners to participate actively and 2) the intellectual claim of repeating those standardized sentences is trivial → method is also called 'Papageien'<sup>9</sup>-method

#### 1.2.4) The Communicative Language Teaching approach

- appeared in the 1970s & 1980s; very new approach in FLT compared to previous methods
- language teaching is no longer a system of rules<sup>10</sup>; focus lies on teaching the ability to communicate in the target language (connects classroom learning with language activities outside the classroom)
- uses authentic texts supported by media elements (visual and audio)
- learner's focus lies not only on the language but the learning process itself
- little use of student's mother tongue is permitted (similarity to "Direct Method"); L2 is used in communicative activities but also classroom management → L2 as a vehicle for communication

- main goal: to perform communication in L2 by using meaningful language (≠ GTM)

<sup>4</sup> Viëtor (1886), cited in McKenzie-Brown (2006).

<sup>5</sup> Berlitz Cooperation is a training and language education company with the headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. It was founded by Maximilian Berlitz, a German language instructor in Providence, Rhode Island in 1878 - A/N.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Richards/Rodgers (2005), p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Abbr. for Foreign Language classroom

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Larsen-Freeman (2000), p. 35, Brown (1994), p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> engl. 'parrot'

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Nuan (1989), p. 12.

- grammar explanations within a communicative context and working with functional texts
- **all 4 language skills are involved equally!**
- success of this approach depends also on students (e.g. work independently to get an access to grammar<sup>11</sup> etc.)

### 1.2.5) The “Intercultural method”

- new approach, developed within the 1980s
- main goal is to understand other cultures languages and more importantly their foreign customs and traditions
- use fictional, intercultural texts (e.g. intercultural literature like ‘Migrationsliteratur’<sup>12</sup>) to talk about differences between cultures, stereotypes etc. (→ language is always connected to culture)
- self-perception through the foreign culture; learner will acquire intercultural competences (empathy) and can put themselves in the positions of others
- common topics: intercultural misunderstandings, stereotyping, cultural shocks etc.

- knowledge about cultural differences, traditions and cultural codes are as important as practicing grammar and vocabulary to be able to perform communication successfully
- **all 4 language skills are involved equally**; lately modern scholars also consider “intercultural competence” as the 5<sup>th</sup> language skill

## 2) The role of the mother tongue in foreign language classes

### 2.1) Curriculum about teaching English at German ESL, JHS and High Schools

- in English lessons “the target language (English) is the main language of instruction”<sup>13</sup> to provide an authentic environment for language learners (principle of monolingualism)<sup>14</sup>
- but in some situations, it is okay to use students’ mother language:

1. students feel pressure about a misunderstanding,
2. students didn’t understand instructions (lesson management),
3. L2 would be too long,
4. talking about cultural differences or traditions of a foreign culture

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Nunan (1991), p. 283.

<sup>12</sup> German word for books written by an author with a migration background. Aglaia Blioumi defined this kind of new literature within a ‘New German Literature discourse’ with the following characteristics: 1. dynamic definition of culture, 2. self-critical view of one’s “own” culture, 3. hybridity (co-existence and interaction between different cultures, 4. “doppelte Optik” (germ.: ‘doppelt’ engl. double; ‘Optik’ engl. view, visual appearance) which means the ability to have several perspectives (e.g. on cultural codes) at the same time.

<sup>13</sup> Excerpt of the German school curriculum for primary and secondary schools for all 16 federal states cited in Cf. Butzkamm, W. and Schmid-Schönbein, G. (2008), p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> The German and Japanese school curriculum share this approach: “The most prominent concern held by the academic community in Japan is that of students’ exposure to the target language. In research exploring students’ perceptions of teachers’ language use in an EFL classroom, Tsukamoto (2011) highlights that this concern is in accordance with the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Technology and Science (MEXT) which announced as a curriculum objective that class instructions and activities should be taught in English so as to maximize the students’ exposure to the target language. Therefore, it is to be expected that the NSTE make a concerted effort to maximize students’ exposure to the target language” (Fallon/Wayond (2015), p. 150.

(“As little as possible, no more than less”<sup>15</sup>)

### 2.2) Change of attitudes over time towards the use of the MT

→ for more than 120 years students mother tongue was expelled from FLC<sup>16</sup> (see point 1.2)

- researchers found out that “translation provides an easy avenue to enhance linguistic awareness”<sup>17</sup>; newer methods [1.2.4), 1.2.5)] recognize the importance of comparative analysis between L1 and L2
- the German anclitist and linguist Dr. Prof. Wolfgang Butzkamm stated:

*“Using the mother tongue, we have (1) learnt to think, (2) learnt to communicate and (3) acquired an intuitive understanding of grammar. [...] The mother tongue is, for all school subjects, including foreign language lessons, a child’s strongest ally and should, therefore, be used systematically”<sup>18</sup>*

- Also, psycho-linguists’ argument that using MT (L1) in FLC (L2) isn’t a threat to FL practicing, because learners already developed a language basis from their MT, ergo there is no competition between their MT and FL<sup>19</sup>
- languages are interwoven in the brain in vocabulary, syntax, phonology, and pragmatics (no distinct system of MT and FL)

### 3) Techniques using mother tongue to teach in the foreign-language classrooms

- Prof. Dr. Butzkamm suggests techniques to use the mother tongue more sparingly
- main language in a Foreign-Language Classes should always be the target language
- in a conversation, there are always 2 processes happening at the same time explains Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). The famous Swiss linguist described language in terms of signs, dividing them into **a) le signifiant** (concept) and **b) le signifié** (sound-image)<sup>20</sup>;
- **“chunks of language”, “comprehensible input” → combine correct a) with correct b)** [in this case (b) is foreign sound-image in the target language, A/N]

### 3.1 Sandwich-Technique

→ **Definition:** teacher “inserts a translation between repetitions of an unknown phrase, almost as an aside or with a slight break in the flow of speech to mark it as an ‘intruder’<sup>21</sup>” (L2 => L1 => L2).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. N.N. (2008), p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Cook (2001), p. 404

<sup>17</sup> Cf. ibid., p. 417

<sup>18</sup> Butzkamm (2003), p. 29

<sup>19</sup> Cook (2002), cited in Cf. Timor (2012), p. 9

<sup>20</sup> Saussure’s most influential work, *Course in General Linguistics (Cours de linguistique générale)*, was published by former students Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye after his death in 1916.

<sup>21</sup> Butzkamm (2003), p. 30 f.

Example 1) Teacher: "Bis Morgen – See you tomorrow – Bis Morgen"  
Student: "Bis Morgen"

- important is to say L1-sentences fast und unaccented and L2-sentences well pronounced and in ordinary speed.

Example 2) Teacher: "Bitte hören und nummerieren Sie - write numbers - nummerieren Sie"

- teacher can introduce more authentic texts sooner if students consistently keep track of expressions introduced
- the meaning of new words can students understand quickly and fully concentrate on repeating the new foreign phrase without any interference from L1
- the Teacher functionalize the mother tongue<sup>22</sup> to introduce new language in a meaningful and gradual way<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2 "Code Switching"

**Definition:** "Code Switching is "a phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse"<sup>24</sup>". Youkhana refers to Gumperz/Hernandez-Chavez *Encyclopaedia of language and linguistics* when she says "those who code-switch make a mess out of the conversation and cannot speak the language properly"<sup>25</sup>.

Other researches and linguists like Sert believe that "Code Switching" has a positive effect on the foreign language learning process because we can build a bridge from the known, our native language to the unknown, target language<sup>26</sup>.

#### 3.2.1 The Functions of Teachers' "Code Switching"

- code switching in grammar introductions
- repetitive function of code switching

#### 3.2.2 The Functions of Students' Code Switching

- main function for student code switching is equivalence; they fill in the missing gap with a lexical item of L1 and continue to communicate in L2

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<sup>22</sup> "Thus, there is no interference from the translation, which must be as idiomatic and suited to the context as possible, so that every pupil catches on straight away. They know the exact impact of the utterance because of the accompanying intonation, voice quality, facial expressions and gestures [...] This type of meaning-conveyance is a very long way away from both monolingual definitions or paraphrases and bilingual word-lists, because it includes the pragmatic aspects of meaning and can render emotional overtones. Pupils will be less coy about speaking the FL. They understand so clearly that they trust themselves to use the expression directly and to vary it according to their own needs. And that is precisely the key factor for success in learning: what the learners do with what they have correctly comprehended" (ibid., p. 30f)

<sup>23</sup> McKenzie-Brown (2006), 1ff.

<sup>24</sup> Numan/Carter (2001), p. 275

<sup>25</sup> Gumperz/Hernandez-Chavez (1972), p. 586, cited in Youkhana (2010), p. 4

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Sert (2005), p. 5

- another function of CS for students is reiteration and floor-holding; learner reflects something in L1 the teacher said before in L2. Student wants to check if he/she understood correctly; a teacher could respond in L2 like in the following examples:

Example 1) Student: "私もそれが言いたかったの"  
Teacher: "Oh, I see. In English it is: I was going to say the same. Try it please."

Example 2) Student: "違うゲームがやりたいなあ"  
Teacher: „You mean: I want to play another game. Try it again."

Example 3) Student: "ケン is ドイツへ 2 回行ったことがある" っていう意味ですね."  
Teacher: „Yes, that's correct! Ken has visited Germany twice."

### 3.2.3 Discussion on the Use of "Code switching" in FLC

**Negative Aspects:** (1) "Code Switching" is probably unsuitable for multilingual classrooms (student should share the same native tongue/or at least be on a nativelike level); (2) teacher should also have the same native tongue as the students or speak the language on a native level

**Positive Aspects:** (1) "Where it is used due to an inability of expression, code switching provides a continuity in speech"<sup>27</sup> (communicative purpose); (2) "Code-Switching" can function as a bridge between individual's talking in two or more languages at the same time (interpersonal function)

### 4. Conclusion

- Teachers, NTSE<sup>28</sup>, ALTs or students shouldn't avoid using the learners L1 in FLC.
- "To exclude mother tongue links would deprive students of their richest source [...their] most important ally a foreign language can have"<sup>29</sup>
- old approach: monolingualism < new approach: **functional and strategic multilingualism in Foreign Language Teaching**
- "Sandwiching" and "Code Switching" are useful strategies in FL classroom interaction
- Using learners mother tongue strategically will help to build student rapport, enriches teachers and learners cross-culture experiences, creates a positive classroom atmosphere, and can be a useful tool for comprehension and instruction<sup>30</sup>
- "knowing and judiciously using your students' native language can make you better teachers"<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Skiba (1997), 1f.

<sup>28</sup> Native Speaking Teacher of English

<sup>29</sup> Butzkamm (2003), p. 30f.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Cotsworth/Medlock (2013), p. 162 f.

<sup>31</sup> McKenzie-Brown (2012), p. 212

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