

## Appendices

In Spring 2011 I was given the opportunity to teach the *Didaktická propedeutika* course for the first time. As I was still in the process of writing this thesis, the enclosed handouts do not correspond entirely to the course syllabus as described in the thesis. Whilst teaching the course, I made some practical findings regarding the timing of activities but also of the actual content of the course. It is more than likely that the syllabus presented here is a working one and it will keep developing over the years. More topics could have been introduced (especially bilingualism, and English as a lingua franca), whilst perhaps some other ones could have been left out. The course was accompanied by visuals in the form of computer presentations (containing important diagrams and also in-class practical exercises and tasks), recordings (e.g. samples of the various stages of child speech) and short video clips.

In the last seminar I carried out an internal evaluation. For a copy of the questionnaire and a summary of results please see Appendix 2.

The appendices contain the following materials:

Appendix 1 – Seminar handouts (Spring 2011)

Appendix 2 – Student evaluation (Spring 2011) – questionnaire and results

# **Appendix 1**

**Seminar handouts (Spring 2011)**

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar I

### I. Language

Laurie Bauer (2007): "linguists have to define language for their own purposes"

Noam Chomsky (1928) – The creative side of language is one of the "mysteries which simply lie beyond the reach of our minds, structured and organised as they are, either absolutely beyond those limits, or at so far a remove from anything we can comprehend with requisite facility that they will never be incorporated within explanatory theories intelligible to humans." Chomsky (1980) *Rules and Representations*

#### Michael Halliday (1925) – Language as social semiotic

Systemic, functional view of language.

Expressing meaning in context, not the set of all possible grammatical sentences.

The text rather than the sentence.

Usage rather than grammaticality.

#### Halliday's two main functions of language

– IDEATIONAL – allows people to deal with the external world

– INTERPERSONAL – allows people to deal with each other

—> Language can be seen as both abstract knowledge and as human behaviour.

#### Six meanings of language (V. Cook)

1 a human representation system

4 the possession of a community

2 an abstract external entity

5 the knowledge in the mind of an individual

3 a set of actual or potential sentences

6 a form of action

#### Language and constructivism – Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934)

Language is perceived as an instrument or tool of thought.

*"The transition from inner speech to external speech is not a simple translation from one language to another... It is a complex dynamic process involving the transformation of the predicative, idiomatic structure of inner speech into syntactically articulated speech intelligible to others."*

#### Halliday's Language-Based Theory of Learning

Learning as a linguistic process – three interconnected areas: learning language, learning content through language, and learning about language.

– > Language is more than a skill – it is also a tool for all other learning.

– > Language is both a means to an end and an end in itself.

Language? What's it like? – Systematic. – Symbolic. – Social.

Language and culture, national identity and heritage.

Language as a means of transmitting knowledge.

### II. Applied Linguistics

Applied linguistics presupposes linguistics – you cannot apply what you do not know.

'the task of applied linguistics is to mediate' between linguistics and language use' (G. Cook)

'the academic discipline concerned with the relation of knowledge about language to decision making in the real world' (G. Cook)

'... the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue' (Brumfit)

'a broadly interdisciplinary field concerned with promoting our understanding of the role language plays in human life.' (J. House)

### III. Linguistic identity, language ego, linguistic self...

#### Sapir-Whorf – Language-relativity Hypothesis

– differences in the way languages encode cultural and cognitive categories affect the way people think, so that speakers of different languages will tend to think and behave differently depending on the language they use

Two different versions:

(i) the **strong version** that language determines thought and that linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive categories

(ii) the **weak version** that linguistic categories and usage influence thought and certain kinds of non-linguistic behavior

*The diversity of languages is not a diversity of signs and sounds but a diversity of views of the world.* Humboldt, 1820

“To have a second language is to have a second soul.” Charlemagne

**Friedrich Nietzsche** in *Human, All Too Human*:

“To learn many languages fills the memory with **words instead of with facts and ideas**, even though in every man, memory is a vessel that can take in only a certain limited amount of content. Also, **learning many languages is harmful** in that it makes a man believe he is accomplished, and actually does lend a certain **seductive prestige in social intercourse**; it also does harm indirectly by undermining his acquisition of well-founded knowledge and his intention to earn men's respect in an honest way. Finally, **it is the axe laid to the root of any finer feeling for language within the native tongue; that is irreparably damaged and destroyed**. The two peoples who produced the greatest stylists, the Greeks and the French, did not learn any foreign languages.”

#### **Literature:**

Berns, M. (2010) Concise Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics, Elsevier  
Davies, A. (2007) An Introduction to Applied Linguistics, Edinburgh University Press  
Jordan (2004) A Theory Construction in SLA, John Benjamins

#### **Key sources for applied linguistics and ELT (journals):**

Language Teaching (published quarterly by Cambridge University Press)  
ELT Journal (published quarterly by Oxford University Press)  
Language Learning (published quarterly by Wiley)  
Modern Language Journal (published quarterly by Blackwells)  
System (published quarterly by Elsevier)  
Applied Linguistics (published quarterly by Oxford University Press)  
Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (published quarterly by Cambridge University Press)  
English for Specific Purposes (formerly The ESP Journal) (published quarterly by Elsevier)  
The International Review of Applied Linguistics (published quarterly by De Gruyter Mouton)  
TESOL Quarterly (1966)

also: Australian Review of Applied Linguistics (1980) – Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics (1996) – International Journal of Applied Linguistics (1991) – Issues in Applied Linguistics (1990) – Journal of Applied Linguistics (2004) – Discourse and Society (1990) – Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development (1980) – Language and Education (1986) – Language and Literature (1992) – Language Assessment Quarterly (2004) – Language Testing (1984) – Language, Culture and Communication (1988) – Second Language Research (1985) – Studies in Second Language Acquisition (1978) – World Englishes (1982)

#### **A selection of useful abbreviations in the world of ELT**

ALTE	Association of Language Testers in Europe
BULATS	Business Language Testing Service
CAE	Certificate in Advanced English (Cambridge ESOL, advanced)
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (Cambridge ESOL)
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CPE	Certificate of Proficiency in English (Cambridge ESOL, post advanced)
DELTA	Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (Cambridge ESOL)
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESP	English for Special/Specific Purposes
FCE	First Certificate in English (Cambridge ESOL, upper intermediate)
IELTS	International Language Testing Service (Cambridge ESOL etc, upper intermediate/post advanced)
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
KET	Key English Test (Cambridge ESOL, elementary)
PET	Preliminary English Test (Cambridge ESOL, pre-intermediate/intermediate)
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar 2

### Theories of learning

**Socrates** (fifth century B.C.) – learning as a process of remembering; **Seneca** (first century A.D.) – the importance of learning on the development of the mind; **Juan Luis Vives** (1493-1540) – importance of rational programs of study; **Erasmus** (1466–1536)– learning should be pleasant, harsh discipline is unnecessary etc.; **Comenius** (1592–1671); **Johann Friedrich Herbart** (1776–1841) – precursor of the scientific study of learning and teaching, stressing the important role in learning of **prior knowledge** consisting of mental states or ideas (Vorstellungen); new ideas are learned by relating them to already existing mental states by a process of “apperception”

**20th century** – the age of the scientific of learning

### I. Behaviourism

**Primary concern:** Find the links between behavior and the observable social and physical environment.

**Key methods:** natural-science methods – focus on observable and measurable behavior-environment relationships

– roots in **Pavlov’s** discovery of what is now known as **classical conditioning** (salivating dogs etc.) – learning (aka conditioning) occurs when a neutral stimulus (bell) is associated with an unconditioned stimulus (food) to elicit a conditioned response (salivation) – the most basic and fundamental way that all animals, including humans, learn most new responses, emotions, and attitudes

– **J.B. Watson** (1878–1958) – didn’t want psychology to concentrate solely on internal mental activities as, he believed, they could not be studied objectively; he put emphasis on strictly observable behaviours → observable stimuli and observable responses (e.g. Little Albert’s fears) (use of classical conditioning in advertising)

**Thorndike’s behaviourism** (Edward Thorndike, 1874–1949)

– usually called “connectionism” – the connections between stimuli and responses are controlled by **different laws of learning**, the most important being the “**law of effect**”: a response to a stimulus is strengthened or reinforced when it is followed by a positive rewarding effect. The second major law – S-R connections become stronger by exercise and repetition – is the “**law of exercise**”.

**Skinner’s operant conditioning** – distinguishes between behaviour elicited by external stimuli and **operant behaviour initiated by the individual**. Rewarding the correct parts of the more complex behaviour taken as a whole, reinforces it and makes it more likely to recur. Reinforcers thus control the occurrence of the desired partial behaviours and this is called “operant conditioning”.

The key tools for operant conditioning are reinforcement and punishment:

**Positive reinforcement:** when a response is followed by a rewarding stimulus (a treat as a reward) –

**Negative reinforcement:** when a response is followed by the removal of something unpleasant or undesired

**Positive punishment:** when a response is followed by an unpleasant stimulus

**Negative punishment:** when a response is followed by the removal of a positive stimulus

**Opposition to behaviourism** – humans are more than just a set of responses to external stimuli acquired in laboratory settings and using meaningless tasks. What about the mind and what happens inside it? How about acquisition of more complex behaviour/skills/knowledge?

**Effect on language teaching:** especially the audio-lingual method

### Gestalt psychology and the Würzburg School of “Denkpsychologie”

– the European counterparts of behaviourism, which they consider too mechanistic

– gestalt which means a “configuration” – an organised whole as opposed to a collection of parts; human behaviour cannot be fully understood by the behaviourist approach of breaking it down into its constituent parts, on the contrary, it has to be studied as a whole.

### II. Cognitive psychology (late 1950s–)

**Primary concern:** Using scientific methods to study human mental activities.

– infl. of maths, computers, brain-scanning technology – the learner is not seen as a set of responses but as an information processor who absorbs information, performs cognitive operations on it and stores it in memory

– the computer as an information-processing device becomes a metaphor for the human mind

- knowledge is acquired (popularity of lecturing and textbooks, the learner is a passive recipient)
- major objection – cognition and learning are taken as processes happening simply within the mind, whilst knowledge is independent of the situations in which it materializes

### **Constructivism (1970s–80s)**

- learners are not seen just as passive recipients, they actively construct their knowledge and skills through interaction with the environment and through reorganisation of their own mental structures
- the language learner deduces rules from examples
- knowledge acquisition → knowledge construction
- many different versions of constructivism, but one thing in common – **learner-centred approach**
- the teacher becomes a cognitive guide of student learning instead of a knowledge transmitter

### **Social-constructivism**

“situated cognition and learning” – the important role of context, especially social interaction and co-operative learning

### **Vygotsky – Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

*“What the child can do in co-operation today, he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it: it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions.”*

- difference between what the learner can manage unaided, and with the teacher present
- there are always some skills that are accessible to the learner, and some that are not → preparedness
- accessible skills/knowledge are within the ZPD – effective teaching should ensure that a learner is presented with tasks/information within his ZPD

### **Scaffolding (Vygotsky)**

- the processes of support that enable the learner to reach the next stage in learning – series of steps – the steps should facilitate understanding rather than competence
- self-reflection and evaluation – important elements of the learning process → **metacognition** – self-reflecting on how learning has been tackled

**Scaffolding techniques: Introductory activities** (lead-in activities) provide the means for understanding new learning (e. pre-listening discussion)

**Recap activities:** highlight the key points, revisit previous work and draw on prior knowledge

**Bridge-building activities:** develop the skill in making connections between the ideas and the content, and between the new learning and previous learning

**Using to prevent losing:** learner should practise new knowledge and skills, as this leads to **automaticity**

**Consolidation activities:** finish with a summary of possible consolidation activities (over-learning)

### **Jerome Bruner (b. 1915)**

- principle of readiness – the learner must be cognitively and emotionally ready for new learning
- teaching needs to be structured so that it can be easily grasped by a student
- teaching should be designed to facilitate extension and fill in the gaps in a student’s understanding

### **The Constructivist Teaching Sequence (Driver 1985)**

**ORIENTATION** (introduction of the context of the lesson) → **ELICITATION OF IDEAS** (establishing what pupils already know and what they think) → **RESTRUCTURING OF IDEAS** (clarification and exchange, exposure to conflict situations, construction of new ideas, evaluation) → **APPLICATION OF IDEAS** (consider how the new knowledge can be applied) → **REVIEW**

**Common objections to constructivism:** Not much effect on long-term memory. Self-instruction and problem-solving can lead to misconceptions. Its techniques are often too time-consuming.

### **Literature:**

- Glassman & Hadad (2009) *Approaches to Psychology*, Open University Press  
 McGregor, D. (2007) *Developing Thinking, Developing Learning*, Open University Press  
 Randall, M. (2007) *Memory, psychology, and second language learning*, John Benjamins  
 Reid, G. (2007) *Motivating Learners in the Classroom*, Paul Chapman Publishing

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar 3

### First Language Acquisition

#### How is L1A studied (Ingram)

- **diary studies** – longitudinal, by parents (parental diary, e.g. Karel Ohnesorg)
  - esp. in the 19th c. – H. Taine, Preyer, Clara and Wilhelm Stern (*Die Kindersprache*, 1907)
  - pros:** providing a database of L1A
  - cons:** varying quality, possibly biased, randomness; descriptive, little effort to forming a theory
- **large sample studies** – observing different children at the same stage and comparing
  - result of the emergence of behaviourism
  - cross-sectional studies rather than longitudinal
  - pros:** systematic observation, quantification of results
  - cons:** lack of linguistic sophistication (focus mainly on lexis, sentence lengths and sounds), no recordings, just transcriptions
- **longitudinal language sampling** – the same child over a period of time but comparing many children, like diary studies but the children are not the offspring of the investigators, and they focus on complete language samples, not just random notes
  - pros:** large sample of language, longitudinal, systematic audio recording, non-parental (the child is visited at regular intervals and progress is assessed), attention to all aspect of language including pragmatic competence

#### Methods and techniques

- written records (diaries), audio records and video records
- language production experiments – e.g. using nonce words (the wug test)
- brain imaging techniques
- high-amplitude sucking tests, head-turn preference procedure, fetal studies

**CHILDES** – the Child Language Data Exchange System – an extensive computerized database on child language production – contains data from over thirty different languages: <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/> – includes transcriptions, recordings and videos – of amazing value for research (also look at <http://talkbank.org>)

#### Stages of L1A

- any reference to stages can only be approximate – various stages and components happen simultaneously, lots of personal differences (the boundaries between stages are orientational)

#### Crying and vegetative sounds (0–6 weeks)

#### Cooing – 6 weeks, Laughter – 16 weeks, Vocal play – 16 weeks–6 months

- experimentation with sounds, no meaning yet, movement of organs resembles that in the production of speech

#### Babbling (6–10 months)

- sounds and patterns of sounds are beginning to emerge; reduplication (baba, gaga, babababa, gagagaga); it is not clear how the sounds relate to the sounds of the language around them

#### One-word utterances (10 –18 months)

- new words are added only slowly, some also drop out; vocabulary of up to about 50 words whose phonetic form is not necessarily the same as when produced by adults
- holophrastic phrases - single-unit forms functioning as sentences or phrases

#### Two-word utterances (18 months)

- ‘vocabulary explosion’, gradual emergence of grammar (stringing words together)

#### Telegraphic speech (2 years)

- utterances of two and more words

#### Full sentences (2 years 6 months)

- developing morphology – inflectional morphemes
- ing-form is the first to appear (doggy barking, baby crying, daddy reading book)
- the the plural -s; possessive ‘s
- to be --> are, was; about the same time "went" and "came", but actually before the regular -ed which is to follow
- -ed leads to much overgeneralization both with irregular (goed, comed), regular (walkeded) and other forms (wented)
- irregularity usually sorted out after 4 years of age
- finally, third person singular -s, first with lexical verb, then with auxiliaries
- articles – children often have trouble using the/a correctly when they’re starting school

## Common features

Overgeneralization – a rule is made generally applicable (*foots*)

Overextension – a single word may refer to many things (any four-legged animal is a *doggie*)

Undergeneralization – in certain contexts the word for a whole category might be used like a proper name to signify one particular referent

## The development of syntax

– three stages for questions and negatives (18–26 months, 22–30 months, 24–40 months)

– questions – using wh words and rising intonation to mark questions (Where mummy? Mummy?)

– more complex questions (You want look? Why you looking?)

– inversion of the auxiliary happens quite late, some children starting school have yet to acquire it

– negation – using no or not before the utterance (no book, no sit there)

– then “don’t” and “can’t” start appearing (I don’t want it.)

– then other, more complex auxiliaries – didn’t, won’t

## The development of discourse

– conversational skills

– establishing a topic of conversation, keeping conversation going and developing it, learning how to take turns, learning politeness

### The typology of requests (Ervin-Tripp, 1977)

□ Prelinguistic directives 0.9–1.3: an example would be “Nigel” in Halliday (1975) who used *nananana* spoken at mid-pitch to mean give me that. Such directives are often accompanied by pointing.

□ Telegraphic directives 1.3–2.0: *That mine. Gimme. More cookie.*

□ Limited routines 2.0–2.4: *Where s my X/What’s that?!/Is there X?!/I need X* (all meaning Give me X).

□ Embedded requests 2.4–3.8: *Can I have big boy shoes? Could you give me one?*

□ Advanced embedding 3.8–5.7: *Don’t forget to buy candy. Why don’t you buy some candy?*

□ Hints 2.5–4+: *I can’t do it, Daddy (meaning Do it for me).*

□ Elaborate oblique strategies—desire mentioned 4+: *We haven’t had any candy for a long time.*

□ Elaborate oblique strategies—desire not mentioned 5+: an example of this would be Sophie’s Machiavellian approach in the “I’ve got a headache” conversation above. It is only under questioning from her mother that she reveals her real reason for asking for cucumber for lunch.

## Child directed speech (CDS)

– CDS is culture specific x LA is universal

– often not as fine-tuned to the linguistic development of the baby as we might think, it’s not necessarily an ideal model

– its real value is in that it elicits conversation rather than just provide model of the language

– correcting children’s speech seems to fail to produce significant results – the child must be ready for a given stage

## L1A Theories

### Nature of nurture? (rationalist vs. empiricist)

– Is the capacity to learn language prewired in the brain of the newborn? Are there specialized mechanisms for LL?

### Critical period hypothesis (CPH) (also optimal or sensitive period) (Eric Lenneberg)

– not just a language acquisition, but a general ethology term

– biological clock

– maintains that a child’s ability to learn its native language effectively ends at the onset of puberty, afterwards it becomes impossible (the strong version of CPH) or very difficult (the weak version of CPH)

– phonemic discrimination

– feral children – inconclusive evidence (why were they abandoned?, were they retarded in the first place? etc.)

## Behaviourist traditions

– language learning is simply a matter of imitation and habit formation; role of positive reinforcement

– ?? If children do imitate, why do they produce errors?

– behaviourism offers a basic explanation of how some routine, regular aspects of language are acquired, but it fails to explain more complex processes

### **Nativism/Mentalism – Noam Chomsky**

- since the 1960s
- the logical problem of language acquisition – poverty of the stimulus
- the language acquisition device – a ‘black box’ somewhere in the brain containing principles universal to all Ls
- Universal Grammar – specialized language-learning mechanisms for acquiring L1, a set of principles common to all languages
  - principles – prewired, universal & parameters – triggered by the specific input
- it fails to explain bilingualism and the acquisition of sign languages

### **Cognitive view**

Piaget – LA deploys the same learning mechanisms the child uses to learn anything else, there is nothing unique about L1 learning

### **Interactionists**

Jerome Bruner – the importance of interaction for language learning; it reveals a lot about language and socialization but not so much about, for example, the acquisition of grammar

### **Connectionism**

- **parallel distributed processing** – the child’s processes a lot of information simultaneously → connections are made → neural network is established
- **emergentism** – neural networks are formed as a result of the brain being exposed to a very complex and massive system; the interplay between interactions and constraints gives rise to systematicities

### **How can we make further progress?**

- studying bilinguals
- studying LA in various cultures (ethnographic approach)
- more longitudinal studies + sound methodology of data analysis
- neurological studies, brain imaging techniques, neurolinguistic approaches

### **Literature:**

- Clark, E. V. (2009) *First Language Acquisition*, Cambridge University Press  
Cattell, R. (2007) *Children’s Language, Consensus and Controversy*, Continuum  
Ingram, D. (1989) *First Language Acquisition*, Cambridge University Press  
Lust, B. (2006) *Child Language, Acquisition and Growth*, Cambridge University Press  
O’Grady, W. (2005) *How Children Learn Language*, Cambridge University Press  
Peccei, J.S. (2006) *Child Language*, Routledge

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar 4

### Second Language Acquisition Theories

#### Learning vs. acquisition

- English as a second language (ESL) vs. English as a foreign language (EFL) – different goals (possibly) and motivation, different environment (native vs. foreign-language classroom), exposure to the target language (much more significant in the second language context)
  - also compare the context of L1A and L2 learning (age, environment, context, motivation)
- Question: Are there different implications for ESL and EFL?

#### SLA

- “the study of how learners create a new language system” – “the study of what is learned of a second language and what is not learned” (Gass and Selinker, 2008)
- initial state for SLA – the existence of L1 and of universals

#### The formation of theories of SLA

- three major scientific traditions which have a deep influence on the formation of theories of SLA: behaviourist, cognitive, and dialogical/interactionist

#### Behaviourists

- LA is a process of habit formation resulting from the stimulus-response (and reward) principle
- language learning is not significantly different from any other type of learning
- L1A is seen as a process of imitation and habit formation, and of putting smaller structures as the building blocks of a pyramid – phonetic features constitute phonological features, which in turn make up morphological structures that finally combine into syntax (cf. structural linguistics) –> the teaching of foreign languages is to start with the teaching of pronunciation – each level of the pyramid is to be completed before the construction of the pyramid can continue – the process is believed to be made much more complicated by the effects of L1 interference (negative interference)

#### Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) (Robert Lado)

- its main method is the comparing of the mother tongue with the foreign language, and realizing the areas of negative interference (the harmful effect of the L1 in the areas where it is dissimilar to L2) and positive interference (where the similarities between L1 and L2 can be exploited)
  - imitation and repetition are the key techniques, and "practice makes perfect" the key motto
  - errors are seen as sins which must be avoided and rooted out at all costs
  - comparison of L1 and L2 makes it possible to predict errors
- BUT: classroom reality – students make unpredictable mistakes and not always making the predictable ones  
+ difficulty in making an objective comparison of different languages

#### Error Analysis (EA)

- EA does not try to explain learner errors by negative interference but simply by analysing the target language
- errors are not seen as sins but as necessary steps towards mastery of the target language
- errors are attempts and hypotheses which the learner must experiment with to see whether he was right or not

#### L1=L2 Hypothesis (Identity Hypothesis)

- the comparison of L1A with L2A gradually led to the development of Morpheme Order Studies (the order of acquisition of morphology in L1A and L2A) – this, though, only applies to the early stages of development of L1
- the proponents believed that L1A and L2A are governed by essentially the same principles springing from an identical innate mechanism
- SLA is no longer seen as merely a habit-formation exercise, but as a mental process —> **mentalism**

#### Mentalist/Nativist/Innatist theories of SLA

- language is a human-specific, innate faculty
- input sets the parameters of individual languages
- LA does not depend on intelligence, personality and other learner variables

### **Critical period hypothesis claims for SLA**

- adult learners have an initial advantage but will never achieve native-like command of the TL (esp. pronunciation)
- the route of acquisition is the same for children and adults
- arguments for CPH – L2 learners are not as uniformly successful as children in the process of L1A
- arguments against CPH – L2 learners can attain native-like proficiency
- > reality (probably) – no cutoff point but a gradual decline, CPs for different competences

### **CPH reformulated**

- R. Ellis → there is a *sensitive period* – acquisition is easier and more efficient
- there might be different CPs for different competences (Selinger)
- LAD does not disappear with age, but unless the path to it is swept regularly access becomes difficult (Long) → gradual decline (in adult learners combined with external factors – stress, lack of time, worries)

### **Krashen's Input Hypothesis** (Stephen Krashen, b. 1941, University of Southern California)

- based on 5 points:

1. **Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis** – (internalization of language happens thanks to subconscious acquisition and conscious learning but acquisition plays a far greater role in attaining fluency than learning);
2. **Monitor Hypothesis** (the body of language that the learner has learned acts as a “monitor” of the active production of language, the learner employs the monitor to perform self-monitoring and self-correction which is both good and bad as on the one hand it guarantees a higher degree of accuracy, but on the other hand it makes the learner pay more attention to form rather than meaning);
3. **Natural Order Hypothesis** (language is acquired in a natural, predictable order, but this order is not necessarily based on any features of complexity or simplicity, the natural order cannot be changed and is immune to deliberate teaching);
4. **Input Hypothesis** (learners should be exposed to language which is only a fraction more advanced than their own level, as this means they understand most of the input whilst being moderately challenged);
5. **Affective Filter Hypothesis** (the affective filter is a label for negative feelings such as anxiety, fear, self-doubt, boredom which impede acquisition; acquisition does not happen well in environments where the affective filter is high).

### **Cognitive theories of SLA**

- language is a part of cognitive development (Piaget) – general principles of learning apply to language learning
- errors are a necessary condition for learning and are not necessarily internalised

### **Gass's model of SLA** (see p. 3 of this handout)

- a progressive model – 5 stages of converting input into output →
  - apperceived stage – the learner relates past experiences to “noticed” material (i.e. new language)
  - comprehended input – the learner does the work to understand (cf. Krashen's comprehensible input where the learner is presented with what he can understand)
  - intake – assimilation of linguistic items, hypothesis formation and testing, psycholinguistics at play
  - integration – attempted integration of linguistic information – storage of items + development of L2 grammar
  - output – production stage (not identical to one's grammar – cf. diff. bt one's ability to speak and write L2)

**objections:** difficult to distinguish between the individual stages

### **Interactionist/Dialogical theories of SLA**

- language is of dialogical nature, and it develops as a result of interaction between people
- Vygotsky – the Zone of Proximal Development + mediation (people who are models for the learner)
- Bruner – Language Acquisition Socialization System – the mediator (teacher, parent) modifies the input so that it is within the ZPD and the learner can cope

**objections:** these theories do not define the nature of language as a system of words and grammar

### **Literature:**

- Ellis, R. (2008) *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford University Press
- Gass, S. M. and L. Selinker (2008) *Second Language Acquisition*, Routledge
- Johnson, M. (2004) *A Philosophy of Second Language Acquisition*, Yale University Press
- Krashen, S. (1981) *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*, Pergamon Press
- Lightbown, P. M. and N. Spada (1999) *How Languages are Learned (Second Edition)*, Oxford University Press
- Mitchell, R. and F. Myles (1998) *Second Language Learning Theories*, Hodder Arnold
- Saville-Troike, M. (2006) *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*, Cambridge University Press

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar 5

### Individual Learner Characteristics I (learner modalities, learner variables)

- “enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree” (Dörnyei 2005)
- they include language aptitude, motivation, personality, anxiety (core factors) + age, gender, intelligence – these factors overlap and are hard to examine

### Age: The younger the better?

- critical period hypothesis (see previous handouts) → sensitive period for LA
- if natural exposure to L2 starts early, the learner is likely to achieve a higher degree of proficiency than a learner who starts at an adult age

*Can adult learners achieve native-like proficiency in phonology?* Yes, but it is not as likely as with children. At the same time there is no guarantee that if a child starts early, it will not have an accent.

In other areas of L, adults can be quite a bit more successful. Various studies show that with a later start there is a smaller chance of perfect acquisition, but no reasons are given.

### *How well can adults learn? Are they capable of learning implicitly?*

Adults learn explicitly → they have an initial advantage over children (esp. in morphology and syntax)

- neurological changes in adults – the loss of plasticity (flexibility) in the brain – a slow loss → use it or lose it
- external factors – time, stress, energy

### Age: Implications for teaching

Teaching children requires skills and intuitions which are very different from those required in teaching adults.

- **teaching children** – rules are difficult to conceptualize (and thus often meaningless to introduce); avoid abstract concept and linguistic labels; focus on functions; the adult concept of “correctness” might be ungraspable by a child
  - a lot of repetition is needed
  - low attention span
  - do “here and now” activities
  - a variety of short activities inc. hands-on activities, physical activities, games, music
  - enthusiasm from the teacher – exaggerate, use humour, engage their curiosity
  - use sensory aids, employ all of the senses, nonverbal language
  - patience and support
  - give every child a chance to try things out
  - learning is more likely to be indirect than direct
- **teaching adults** – a healthy level of abstraction is generally fine
  - longer attention span but don’t overdo it
  - no need to appeal to all of the senses but it liven things up
  - work on their motivation, learning strategies and autonomy
- **teaching teens** – be aware of peer pressure
  - avoid embarrassing them
  - attention is likely to be a problem – involve them – excite by being exciting
  - capacity for abstraction increases, but liven things up with sensory activities as well
  - praise, recognize their strengths and talents
  - be empathetic

### Motivation: Why do people want to learn languages?

- **motivation** – whatever makes people act in a particular way
- **intrinsic motivation** – activity for no reason other than the enjoyment and satisfaction of engaging in it (love of Ls)
- **extrinsic motivation** – activity which leads to a specific end, goal oriented, tangible rewards (exams, career, grades)

### *To what extent is motivation based on human needs?*

**Abraham Maslow’s** hierarchy of needs – physiological → safety → belongingness → esteem → self-actualization

- now considered simplistic (other factors might be included, there are overlaps, the order might vary depending on the situation) but a good summary of the “first comes first” principle
- other needs/desires models – Murray, Kano, Maslow, Maslow and plenty more
- the affect of the attitude to towards the community of speakers whose language we are learning (e.g. Russian in Czechoslovakia)

## **Gardner's socio-educational model of language learning**

- incorporates the learner's cultural beliefs, their attitudes towards the learning situation, their integrativeness and motivation
- motivation is the absolute key factor – a combination of the effort and the desire
- Attitude Motivation Test Battery – questionnaires for testing LL motivation
- integrative orientation – learner wants to identify with the culture of the speakers of the TL
- instrumental orientation – arise from goals
- **Zoltan Dörnyei** (1994, 2005) – three levels of LL motivation (motivation seen as a multifaceted construct)
  - language level (attitudes to culture and community, usefulness of the L)
  - learner level (individual characteristics of the learner – need for achievement and self-confidence)
  - learning situation level (the course, the teacher, the dynamics of the group)

## **Motivation: Implications for teaching**

- one of the key factors; different learners have different motivation and are motivated differently
- it is more than arousing the interest – you have to sustain it and channel it towards specific goals
- perceived value of the activity – learning that makes sense; explain the purpose of tasks
- work with curiosity and keep the level of curiosity up at all times
- do not be overly demanding, set tasks which can be achieved
- students are involved in making decisions regarding learning
- help learners set their own goals and help them build up their confidence and internal beliefs
- work on their intrinsic motivation by making learning and its subject exciting
- treat your students as partners and individuals, respect their personality and their strategies
- signs of a healthy level of motivation – deep involvement and concentration, sense of direction and goals, sense of progress, confidence in success, apparent enjoyment, the feeling that time flies faster than ever

## **Gender in SLA: Do girls learn better than boys?**

- L1A – females tend to acquire L faster than males; very little research in the effect of gender on SLA
- in adulthood, on average women use 7,000 words a day, men only 2,000
- neurological differences – different hormones produced by the fetus affect the development of the brain (e.g. different hemispheric organisation)
- boys** – more competitive; want to finish tasks quickly often at the expense of accuracy and neatness; might be more vociferous but less to the point; tendency to show off; often more communicative and outgoing
- girls** – happily collaborate with others; more patience with tasks that need more time to complete; care, attention to neatness; more self-conscious – no pleasure in being the centre of attention; generally quieter; more people orientated
- task preferences – boys (task- and action-based, experiential, information dense) X girls (extended, open-ended, multi-concept, reflective, text-based, interpersonal)

## **Gender: Implications for teaching**

- use of 'effective learning zones' (seating plan) – students sit boy/girl/boy/girl; in groups – two boys/two girls
- boys need a lot of feedback → set clear expectations
- boys feel they need to be listened to & respected, they dislike favouritism and humiliation, they need humour
- everyone needs success – chunking tasks is effective here
- your typical classes will be mixed-gender → mix what you know about both genders

## **Intelligence**

- cognitive capacity necessary for processing learning tasks – in LL, it overlaps with aptitude and memory
- general intelligence (Alfred Binet (1905) – first intelligence (IQ) tests) vs. special intelligences
- intelligence is a composite construct (more next week)
- will a person with a higher IQ be a more successful language learner?
- research shows that the impact of IQ on LL is smaller than in other school subjects
- intelligence seems to be related to the ability to analyze linguistic structures but superior cognitive faculty is not a prerequisite for superior SLA

### **Literature (selection):**

- Cameron, L. (2005) *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*, Cambridge University Press
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001) *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*, Cambridge University Press
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005) *The Psychology of the Language Learner*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Ellis, R. (2008) *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford University Press
- Gurian, M. and P. Henley (2001) *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*, Jossey-Bass
- Mayo, M. and M. Lecumberri (2003) *Age and the Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language*, Multilingual Matters Ltd
- Munoz, C. (2006) *Age And the Rate of Foreign Language Learning*, Multilingual Matters Ltd

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar 6

### Individual Learner Characteristics II (learner modalities, learner variables) – *What is our learner like?*

#### Linguistic aptitude – *Talent for languages. Is it just a myth?*

- some people can acquire a FL with a greater ease than others – “aptitude is consistently the best predictor of language learning success” (Skehan 1989)
- many overlapping traits with general intelligence but no apparent one-to-one correlation
- tests for measuring linguistic aptitude – based on four principles defined by J. Carroll (1965):
  - *phonemic coding ability* – the ability to separate the stream of speech into phonemes to allow the recognition of morphemes;
  - *inductive language learning ability* – the ability to induce rules and notice patterns in a language;
  - *grammatical sensitivity* – the ability to identify grammatical functions of individual words in a sentence;
  - *associative memory capacity* – the ability to store and recall linguistic items.

→ individual learners, however, may not be equally skilled in all abilities

- **Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT, 1958)** – it tests the aspects mentioned above, but it is based on outdated models of the memory, and does not take into account any other factors which might be at play
- **Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery** (latest version 2004) – tests verbal and auditory ability, and motivation, takes into account grade point average
- the **CANAL-FT** test (Cognitive Ability for Novelty in Acquisition of Language) – a central ability in FLL requires the ability to cope with novelty and ambiguity – the test includes four areas of language (lexical, morphological, semantic, and syntactic) and two modes of input and output (visual and oral). The test is based on the gradual learning of an artificial language.

**Issues:** *Where does aptitude come from? Is it innate, or developed? Is it affected by prior language learning? Is it just a function of the working memory as some theoreticians suggest?*

#### Multiple intelligencies (MIs) – Howard Gardner (1983) – *Common sense or a revolution?*

- a belief that human intelligence is more than just IQ, and the fact that the traditional IQ has been on a pedestal for so long is not good, it may possibly harm otherwise very talented people with a “lower” IQ
- Gardner: “I am deliberately being somewhat provocative.”
- Gardner currently recognizes 9 types of intelligence – 1. **linguistic** (the capacity to use words effectively), 2. **logical-mathematical** (the capacity to use numbers effectively and to reason well), 3. **spatial** (visual thinking, orientation in space, sensitivity to colour and shape), 4. **musical** (sensitivity to pitch, rhythm, form, colour and tone of music), 5. **bodily-kinaesthetic** (skilled use of one’s body for various purposes), 6. **interpersonal** (ability to respond appropriately and effectively to others, to recognize other’s moods, intentions, motivations and feelings), 7. **intrapersonal** (knowing oneself and adapting one’s behaviour accordingly), 8. **naturalistic** (sensitivity to one’s natural surroundings), 9. **existential** (“philosophical” dimension)

**Implications for teaching:** recognizing the fact that there might be various types of intelligence should lead to teachers’ actively searching for different approaches to teaching, trying to appeal to the various MIs

**Controversy:** little empirical evidence to support the theory but it seems to affect teaching positively; some of these intelligences should perhaps rather be called skills, talents or aptitudes

#### Learning styles – *A fad or a thought-provoking concept leading to effective teaching?*

- a belief that different learners have different learning requirements depending on how they process information – some learn best deductively, others inductively etc.
- **field dependence/independence** – the ability to separate details from the background (“seeing the trees for the forest”) – this influential concept in the general theories of learning has so far not been found instrumental in SLA (see Ellis for a detailed overview of research)
- **Reid’s perceptual learning styles** (1987) – sensory preferences – some learners tend to prefer **visual** presentations, others **auditory**, **kinaesthetic** or **tactile** (i.e. different sensory preferences)
- group preference (learning with others) vs. individual preference (learning by oneself) (Reid)
- **Kolb’s model of learning styles** – by combining two dimensions, abstract vs. concrete thinking and active vs. reflective information processing he identifies four types of learners – 1. **accommodators** (enjoy flexibility, risk-takers), 2. **assimilators** (keen on problem-solving), 3. **convergers** (prefer detailed steps in learning), 4. **divergers** (need personal involvement in tasks) – the detailed descriptions are somewhat reminiscent of tabloid horoscopes in that so much of

the information seems to fit so many people

- in reality there is little empirical evidence, a lot of overlap, and questionable implications for teaching
- the different styles do not exclude each other, and the most successful learners are to be found amongst those who combine different styles

**Implications for teaching:** teachers should try to incorporate alternative ways of presenting information and develop a flexible teaching style without trying to impose their own preferred way of learning on others

### **Affect in language learning**

- attitudes, feelings, personal states, moods, opinions, language and culture shock, stress and anxiety
- **affective filter** (Krashen 1985) – explains why on some occasions we manage to learn whilst on other occasions we do not → the affective filter might be blocking out the input, intake and the output
- acc. to Krashen children do not have an affective filter
- teachers should strive to lower the AF so that acquisition can be unimpeded

**Objection:** *How does the AF actually work? Why does it filter out only certain components?*

### **Anxiety**

- not always negative, but too much fear can seriously affect performance
- beneficial/facilitating anxiety vs. inhibitory/debilitating anxiety (one of the main reasons is the fear of failure → teachers should work to remove the fear of failure)
- also trait anxiety (part of one's personality) vs. state anxiety (only in a particular situation)

**Issues:** Does anxiety facilitate LL? Does it have a negative effect, or is it a result of problems with learning?

### **Willingness to communicate**

- some people seem to want to be involved in communication more than others → type of communication behaviour
- is it fixed, or situation (or mood) dependent?
- attitude to the culture bias (e.g. Russian for Czechs)
- much affected in the classroom by the type of instructional task + the personality
- acc. to McIntyre it is affected by the following factors: intergroup climate, personality, intergroup attitudes, social situation, communicative competence, interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, L2 self-confidence, desire to communicate with a specific person
- it is most closely related to language anxiety, the two strongest predictors are communication anxiety and perceived communication competence

### **Learners' beliefs**

- the learner's ideas (and myths) about LL – important because the learner considers them to be true (but whether he acts accordingly is a question!)
- BALLI (beliefs about language learning inventory, Horwitz 1987) – a questionnaire about learner beliefs – includes five areas: beliefs regarding the difficulty of the TL, the learner's own aptitude, the nature of LL, learning and communication strategies, motivation and expectations
- are beliefs culturally determined, or are they influenced by previous learning experience?
- beginners have more 'naive' beliefs than advanced learners

### **Personality**

- communicative language use and fluency seem to be affected by personality traits such as extroversion and openness to experience
- it is, however, virtually impossible to separate personality traits from other learner modalities, and hence carry out meaningful research (see Ellis and Dörnyei)

### **Literature (selection):**

- Cohen, L., L. Manion and K. Morrison (2004), *A Guide to Teaching Practice*, Routledge
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005) *The Psychology of the Language Learner*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Gass, S. M. and L. Selinker (2008) *Second Language Acquisition*, Routledge
- Ellis, R. (2008) *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford University Press
- Moseley et al. (2005) *Frameworks for Thinking*, Cambridge University Press
- Spolsky, B. (1989) *Conditions for second language learning*, Oxford University Press

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar 7

### Brain, memory and language

- the first recorded discoveries in the field were made by Egyptian surgeons some 5,000 years ago
- in the late 19th century, a French anatomist and anthropologist **Paul Broca** studied people with aphasia and discovered an area of the brain (Broca's area) which is associated with the production of language
- a German neuropathologist **Carl Wernicke** (1848-1905) – noticed that another area of the brain (Wernicke's area) seems to be responsible for the comprehension of language

### Areas of the brain responsible for various language-related skills

- Broca's area – the production of speech
- Wernicke's area – the comprehension of speech
- Exner's centre – writing
- Heschl's gyri – auditory reception
- motor cortex – controls the articulatory muscles of the face, jaw, tongue and larynx
- arcuate fasciculus – connects Wernicke's and Broca's areas

### Methods of observing the brain

- electroencephalographs (EEG) – records brain waves (electrical activity generated in the brain)
- magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) – displays a sliced-up image of the brain at various depths
- positron emission tomography (PET) – studies the chemical activity of the brain
- magnetoencephalography (MEG) – measures the electromagnetic fields generated by the brain at work as it processes various tasks and verbal commands

### Studying people with aphasia

- aphasia – an acquired language disorder due to injury or lesion (symptoms include for example the inability to: comprehend language, pronounce, speak spontaneously, form words, name objects, enunciate clearly, poor enunciation, repeat a phrase, speak grammatically, read, write)
- studies of how different aphasias are correlated with injury to different regions of the brain
- studies of bilingual aphasia – the effect of brain damage on L2

### Language in the brain

- How does neurological development affect SLA?* – lateralization of the brain – as human brain matures certain functions are assigned (lateralized) to the left or the right hemisphere of the brain
- left hemisphere – intellectual, logical, analytic functions, **language**
  - right hemisphere – emotional and social needs, but significant participation in the **early stages of SLA** (some studies showed that the SL learner can be helped by the employment of right-brain activities)

### Some implications of brain-based research for effective teaching

- brain-based research shows that at least some learning differences are biologically based and hence some learners will require different methods, and perhaps also more empathy;
- studies with rats have shown that they learn better when they interact with other rats. Likewise, humans are social beings and learning should be seen as a social process.;
- for the brain to develop, life must include challenges (again, studies of rats show they form many more synapses in a challenging environment);
- play is an important form of stimulation to the brain;
- stress produces chemicals which are detrimental to learning, on the contrary, a relaxed brain produces chemicals instrumental in effective learning – teachers and schools should strive to provide stress-free environment;
- studies of circadian rhythms (24-hour cycle in the biochemical, physiological, or behavioural processes) show, for example, that young children need about one hour after waking up before their brains are prepared for learning. With adolescents this period is increased to three hours. They also show that learning levels drop around midday (esp. with younger children), and that learning performance is seriously slowed down in the afternoon. (Cohen et al., 2004:176)

### Memory

- the capacity of the brain to store information
- many different models of how memory works (but they are models only!)
- two types – **memory for temporary storage**, and **memory for permanent or long-term storage**

- **temporary storage – short term memory** (15–30 seconds, analysis and interpretation of info) + **working memory** (allows for the formation of long-term memories, but mere repetition is no guarantee of that)
- **long-term memory** – info gets into long-term memory along **memory lanes**
- **explicit memory** – formed by semantic and episodic memory
- **implicit memory** – formed by procedural, automatic and emotional memory
  - **semantic memory** stores information acquired by means of language, many repetitions needed + it relies on stimulation by associations, comparisons and similarities
  - **episodic memory** (also called spatial or contextual memory) stores information connected with locations
  - **procedural memory** stores information about the body positions and movement
  - **automatic memory** (conditioned response memory) stores stimuli that trigger off certain reactions
  - **emotional memory** stores emotions and feelings
- the most powerful learning comes from using as many of the five lanes at a time as possible

### Memory: Implications for teaching

- reducing passive learning, and increasing multi-sensory, active, collaborative, co-operative and peer group learning
- increasing learner co-teaching, applied learning and student talk and interaction
- making connections between prior knowledge and new materials
- contextual learning (memory is thought to need triggers, recall of information is activated by the right trigger)

### Memorization strategies

- chunking (learning items in sections, groups, categories and patterns, as this allows easier recall)
- association (connecting and linking information), and mnemonics
- repetition, revision, recycling already acquired items and skills

Jordan et al. (2008) suggest the following working-memory strategies “telling learners which information is most important; beginning with an overview or outline of the material to be learnt; stating the objectives or learning outcomes of a learning session; developing automaticity and speed of response in learners through regular practice; encouraging learners to use the knowledge they already possess; encouraging reflection and meta-cognition; linking difficult-to-remember items to more meaningful ones; encouraging visualization (using image representations); using verbal memory aids such as mnemonics; using mind-mapping techniques; using guided questioning to activate existing schemata and concepts; matching encoding strategies with material to be learned; understanding that learners may need to make schemata explicit and challenge their own assumptions; presenting content in increasing order of complexity; revisiting topics to strengthen retention.”

For long-term strategies they suggest that teachers “link materials to cues that can be used to recall them; remind learners that cues are sufficient to recall the material; encourage learners to create their own cues; teach revision techniques; encourage learners to discover and use their strengths and styles.”

### Memory improvement tips (from Huffman)

- pay attention and reduce interference (mind **where** you sit at school and work at home – remove distractions)
- use rehearsal techniques – maintenance rehearsal (continuous repetition) and elaborative rehearsal (relating to other information that has already been stored)
- use the encoding specificity principle – the closer the retrieval cues are to the original encoding situation, the better the retrieval
- improve your organization – expand the capacity of STM by chunking (organizing) information into a few groups, to improve your LTM, create hierarchies that organize the material in meaningful patterns
- counteract the serial-position effect – as we tend to remember information that occurs at the beginning or end of a sequence, spend extra time with the information in the middle
- manage your time – distributed (spaced) learning sessions are more efficient than cramming
- employ self-monitoring and overlearning – periodically stop and test your understanding of the material you are learning; overlearning—studying information even after you think you already know it
- use mnemonics – mnemonic devices (derived from the Greek word for “memory”) are memory aids (or tricks) based on encoding items in a special way

### Literature (selection):

- Huffman, K. (2010) *Psychology in Action*, John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Obler, L. K. and K. Gjerlow (1999) *Language and the Brain*, Cambridge University Press
- Scaddan, M. (2009) *40 Engaging Brain-based Tools*, Corwin Press, Sage
- Schnelle, H. (2010), *Language in the Brain*, Cambridge University Press
- Sprenger, M. (1999) *Learning & Memory, The Brain in Action*, ASCD
- Whitaker, H. (ed.) (2010) *Concise Encyclopedia of Brain and Language*, Elsevier

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar 8

### A very brief historical overview of language teaching methods

**What is a method?** (μέθοδος – pursuit of knowledge, mode of investigation; A way of doing anything, esp. according to a defined and regular plan)

**Edward Anthony (1963) – method, approach and technique** → **approach** – a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning and teaching; **method** – an overall plan for systematic presentation of L based on a selected approach; **technique** – specific activities manifested in the classroom that were consistent with a method and therefore in harmony with an approach as well

**Jeremy Harmer** (*The Practice of English Language Teaching*) – **approach** – theories about the nature of L and L learning – a description of the L and a model of L competence, SLA theories – attempt at describing what leads to successful language learning; **method** – the practical realisation of approach – types of activities, roles of teachers, learners and materials – when they all conform to a given principle it is easy to talk about a method (e.g. Silent Way), when they are mixed, we tend to speak of postmethod pedagogy; **procedure** – an ordered sequence of techniques (first you do this, then you do that, then... etc.); **technique** – activities which present a concrete implementation of a method (e.g. dictation, silent viewing...)

### Types of methods

**language-centred methods** – principally concerned with linguistic forms (form-focused) → practice leads to mastery; learning is a linear, additive process

**learner-centred methods** – principally concerned with language use and learner needs, both form and function are important (meaning-focused)

**learning-centered methods** – principally concerned with learning processes (meaning-making) – forms will be acquired incidentally; they claim to draw on SLA research

### A brief selection some of the most influential methods in the history of language teaching

**The Grammar-Translation Method (early 19th century–)** (also called the Classical Method)

- a product of its age → reason, law and logic above all – initially a method of teaching classical languages: Greek and Latin (modern languages were seen as inferior) – one of the objectives was to transfer the cultural values → L is an academic discipline, not a tool for communication → primacy of written L & comprehension through **translation**
- memorization of lexis, grammar, paradigms; totally form-focused (errors are bad); learning as mental exercise
- the method later became used for teaching other Ls with the following goals: read literature in FL & translate
- listening, speaking and pronunciation are mostly ignored
- the method is not based on any SLA theory, it is ineffective in teaching the students to communicate

**The Direct Method (DM)** (Berlitz)

- its predecessor was the Series Method – Francois Gouin – an attempt at applying L1A insight to FLT
- DM – translating is not allowed – use of pictures, pantomime, realia – explicit rules are not given
- students are expected to learn to think in the FL, and to correct their own errors
- situational syllabus (e.g. at a hotel, at an airport) + topics (e.g. weather, jobs, hobbies)
- vocabulary is more important than grammar (students can figure out the rules)

**The Audio-Lingual Method**

- drilling sentence patterns/memorizing dialogues – behaviourist conditioning – LA is a process of habit formation (the more, the better) → students were, however, found unable to readily transfer the habits into 'real' communication – after all, as Chomsky pointed out, we can understand and produce L we have never heard, so it is not based on habit
- the mother tongue is seen as source of undesirable interference
- the teacher is a model, the students imitate
- errors have to be stamped out as they can lead to bad habits, good L is praised (cf. positive reinforcement)
- overlearning – learning to use the TL automatically
- vocabulary is seen as second in importance to grammar; L is seen as a set of structures
- **audio-visual method** – similar to ALM; presenting language through filmed scenes

### **Communicative Language Teaching** (cf. Widdowson's Communicative Approach)

- communication is more than just using correct language structures – performing functions
- communication is the primary goal; all classroom communication happens in the TL (but L1 is not banned)
- the teacher is a facilitator (cf. social constructivism)
- errors do not matter too much, fluency is more important (teacher responds to errors later)
- authentic texts; working in groups; coaching in strategies; games; negotiating meaning; functional syllabus (functions – e.g. promising, thanking, refusing, accepting, enquiring etc.); role plays; problem solving activities

**Community Language Learning** (CLL) – whole-person learning → teachers take into account the relationship among students' feelings, physical reactions, instinctive protective reactions, and desire to learn; some adults feel threatened by a new learning situation → teachers are seen as language counsellors who help overcome this fear by being sensitive to the students and helping students to learn from each other, to collaborate

**Silent Way** (Caleb Gattegno, cognitivism, Cognitive Approach) – people use their own cognitive processes to discover the rules of L; **teaching is subordinated to learning** – only the learner can do the learning; the teacher is silent most of the time, using various props (coloured rods) and color charts (for sounds, words and structures) to initiate learning; errors are a natural part of learning – self- & peer-correction

**Total Physical Response** (TPR) – influenced by L1A theories; based on the belief that learning starts with understanding, and production comes later; students follow instructions issued by the teacher (Jump! Turn around! Sit down! Stand up! Walk to the window!) – this is supposed to reduce stress and fear of learning

**Natural Approach** (Krashen & Terrell) – similar to TPR in that comprehension comes first; comprehensible input + low affective filter; students start speaking only when they feel they are ready to

**Desuggestopedia** (formerly Suggestopedia; Georgi Lozanov) – people set up psychological barriers to learning, various fears (e.g. of failure) that reduce their mental power for learning; our brain has a reserved capacity which can be activated but first the barriers have to be 'desuggested'; colourful environment; posters with grammar (peripheral learning); assuming a fictional identity in the classroom; using songs, music, dance and fine art; great attention is paid to the feelings of the students

**Interlinear Method** – translating word for word

**Content-based Instruction** – students use English to learn it; content from other subjects; what is taught and in what order arises from communicative needs; using the students' previous experience; CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning

**Task-based Instruction** – providing natural context for language use; learners complete task which provide them with the opportunity to interact and negotiate meaning; real-world task that the learners are likely to perform + tasks designed by the teacher; project work; planning → collaboration → information gathering → production

**Whole Language Approach** – working from top to bottom; students first try to understand the message of the whole text and then they analyze its components

**Other methods:** co-operative learning, audio-visual approach, Michael Thomas, Pimsleur

### **Limitations of methods**

- methods are based on idealized concepts geared towards idealized contexts (but where is the teacher? and the learner?)
- there is a lot of **overlap**, and often teachers who claim to follow one methods actually combine it with features of another one
- extreme swings, fashions, tendencies, pressures (publishing business, politics)
- many people say that the concept of a method is totally meaningless

Nunan (1991): "Despite their diversity, all methods have one thing in common. They all assume that there is a single set of principles which will determine whether or not learning will take place. Thus they all propose a single set of precepts for teacher and learner classroom behavior, and assert that if these principles are faithfully followed, they will result in learning for all. Unfortunately, little evidence has been forthcoming to support one approach rather than another, or to suggest that it is the method rather than some other variable which caused learning to occur."

## **Eclecticism and post-method pedagogy**

– methods are useful in helping teachers organize their own pedagogy

– **eclecticism** – using and combining the best of what different methods have to offer

– **post-method pedagogy** – best outlined by Kumaravadivelu's ten 'macro-strategies':

1. Maximize learning opportunities by taking account of the local context and specific needs, interests, and abilities of all the learners.
2. Facilitate negotiated interaction by actively involving all learners in classroom discourse.
3. Minimize perceptual mismatches by closing the gap between the implemented and the experienced curriculum.
4. Activate intuitive heuristics by encouraging learners to make educated guesses in inferring grammatical rules.
5. Foster language awareness by raising the learners' sensitivity to language and its role in human life.
6. Contextualize linguistic input in order to provide essential pragmatic clues to meaning.
7. Integrate language skills as they are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.
8. Promote learner autonomy by helping learners to understand and utilize effective learning strategies.
9. Raise cultural consciousness by valuing the contributions of learners as cultural informants.
10. Ensure social relevance by making learners aware of the social, political, economic, and educational environment in which language learning takes place.

**Note:** However much teachers want to excel in their work, in the long run they always have to conform to external pressures of the educational environment and its (often not rational) requirements. Sadly, they rarely enjoy the freedom to reap the fruit of their pedagogic creativity in being able to teach as they see fit.

### **Literature:**

Howatt, A. P. R. & H. G. Widdowson (2009) *A History of English Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003) *Beyond Methods, Macrostrategies for Language Teaching*, Yale University Press

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006) *Understanding Language Teaching*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000) *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press

Richards, J. S. & T. S. Rodgers (1999) *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, Cambridge University Press

Stern, H. H. (1991) *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press

Widdowson, H. G. (1978) *Teaching English as Communication*, Oxford University Press

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar 9

### Interlanguage and proficiency

#### Interlanguage

- stages of FL learning** – 1. initial (a complete or near-complete communicative incompetence); – 2. transitional (called **interlanguage** (=IL) or **learner language**) – IL is “**systematic** linguistic behaviour of learners of a second or other language” (Smith 1994); – 3. final (complete or near-complete communicative competence)
- **IL influenced** by the **transfer** of knowledge from L1 to L2 → **positive transfer** (e.g. based on analogy between L1 and L2) and **negative transfer** (the effect of L1 results in an incorrect utterance in L2)
  - **ILs** are similar (irrespective of the combination of L1 and L2) in many ways → ILs are **systematic**, (the learner possesses a set of internal rules which reflect his level of proficiency), **dynamic** (the learner’s knowledge of L2 undergoes a continuous change), **variable** (despite its systematicity, the IL also changes depending on the context), and **reduced** (the learner possesses a smaller range of forms and functions compared to his L1)
  - **fossilization** – the cessation of development before the norms of the target language are reached
  - various skills develop at a different rate
  - **input** (the language to which the learner is exposed and from which he learns, the linguistic environment of the learner), **intake** (the part of input which is learnt), and **output** (the language the learner produces)

#### Error Analysis

- errors are no longer seen as signs of failure and are now understood as important signs of the developing competence, the indication of what has been learnt and what not
- analysis of errors can deepen our understanding of language learning
- **errors X mistakes** – **errors** are systematic, signs of incomplete knowledge, they are part of the IL; **mistakes** are occasional, accidental slips, they are not systematic, and are not part of the IL
- **reasons for errors:**
  - **language transfer** (both first language and also other language transfer) – interference;
  - **intraference** – due to conflicting pattern within the TL;
  - **teaching induced errors** (introduced by teachers and/or by the teaching method);
  - **overgeneralization** (a newly acquired rule or pattern is applied globally);
  - **affective variables.**
- **attitudes to error correction** – one of the key questions of the practice of LT is error correction (which errors should be corrected, how much? how often?) – learning without mistakes is not learning
- overcorrecting can lead to making the learners afraid to say anything, too little correcting (as in the initial stages of the CLT) can lead to early fossilization of errors – finding the right balance is paramount, also deciding which aspects of the taught L respond best to **form-focused instruction**, and which will develop naturally through **meaning-based instruction**
- **methods of correction** – correcting straight away or later, ignoring some errors, inducing self-correction or peer correction, explicit correction, rephrasing an incorrect utterance (echo) – sensitivity is required

#### Proficiency

- proficiency – the degree of skill with which a speaker can use a language
- the ability to use language in a given context is not a guarantee that using it in a different context will be unproblematic → relation between language use and a given context (cf. a situation of a proficient university student of English and his ability to discuss elementary school maths – most students will not know what an isosceles triangle is, what is a tangent etc.)
- getting by is possible in a lot of everyday situations with just a smattering of L (eg. ordering goods in a shop, many basic travel situations etc.)
- Stern** (1991) defines **proficiency** by looking at native-like proficiency, using the speech of a native speaker as a point of reference. Native speaker proficiency is marked by:
  1. the intuitive mastery of the forms of the language (*Sprachgefühl* – a sense of what is right and wrong),
  2. the intuitive mastery of the linguistic, cognitive, affective and sociocultural meanings, expressed by the language forms,
  3. the capacity to use the language with maximum attention to communication and minimum attention to form, and
  4. the creativity of language use. (ibid)
- **linguistic competence** (defined by Chomsky as ‘the intrinsic tacit knowledge . . . that underlies actual performance’ + **communicative competence** + **creativity**)
- BUT: Is L1 competence the same as L2 competence? → need to establish **LEVELS of proficiency**

## Levels of proficiency

- can be based on levels of linguistic competence or communicative competence → this has an effect on teaching (bias towards form or communication)
- use of standardized tests (e.g. Cambridge exams, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication))
- language tests fall naturally into three main groups: tests of specific structural knowledge, tests of specific functional abilities, and tests that claim to measure general proficiency
- ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) – ALTE levels (can-do statements) now replaced by CEFR – developed in order to help the job market, so that employers would know what their employees “can do” in a FL

## The Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages

- started in 1971
- based on six reference levels for various categories of skills and subskills (provides descriptions of the “can do” type): Basic User – A1 and A2, Independent User - B1 and B2, Proficient User – C1 and C2
- primarily based on self-evaluation – “can do” statements – but only in terms of function and context – “grammar don’t matter” (sic!)

**A1** Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

**A2** Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

**B1** Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

**B2** Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

**C1** Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

**C2** Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

**PROS:** it may give some guidance to teachers as to why they might be teaching, but for that there are better sources and even in this respect the CEFR does not bring anything new whatsoever

**CONS** (please note that I am very sceptical, consider other sources, and feel free to disagree):

- wordy but vague (!!! – e.g. “can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc.” – read it a couple of times and then try and imagine what you would do about it as a teacher; what does it actually say?) – at first sight detailed but on inspection contentless, general, subjective descriptions;
- self-evaluation is not necessarily reliable;
- abused by publishers (recycling of older textbooks with labelling that makes false claims);
- difficulty in designing tests which correspond to the individual levels (with a bit of training a student can get C1 in one type of test, e.g. CAE, but not the same level in IELTS);
- grammar is secondary (accuracy!) – it is actually impossible to attach aspects of grammar to the levels – What is the message to the teachers? Is it that they should not bother concentrating on the form? Will accuracy not suffer?
- the danger of institutions’ not understanding CEFR as a point of reference but as a guide to teaching (a serious problem – once it becomes implemented into the state testing system (cf. Nová maturita) schools will make every attempt to change the actual pedagogy so that their students succeed in the exams) – this is called **washback effect** (but it happens with most exams)
- a political decision turned into a good business initiative, but business and education make perilous friends
- it is also abused as a cure-all for problems with language teaching – whatever problems with language teaching a particular country has, they now say the EU has found the right solution for them

### Seminar 8 – literature:

- Brown, H. D. (2007a) *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching (5th Edition)*, Pearson Education Ltd
- Brown, H. D. (2007b) *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy (3rd Edition)*, Pearson Education Ltd
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: *Learning, teaching, assessment*, Council of Europe, Cambridge University Press
- Gass, S. M. and L. Selinker (2008) *Second Language Acquisition*, Routledge
- Griffiths, C. (ed.) (2008) *Lessons from Good Language Learners*, Cambridge University Press
- Harmer, J. (2001b) *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, Longman
- Johnson, K. (ed.) (2005) *Expertise in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, Palgrave Macmillan
- Knapp, K. and B. Seidlhofer (ed.) (2009) *Handbook of foreign language communication and learning*, Mouton de Gruyter
- Krashen, S. (1981) *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*, Pergamon Press
- Norrish, J. A. (1983) *Language Learners and their Errors*, Macmillan
- Saville-Troike, M. (2006) *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*, Cambridge University Press
- Schauer, Gila A. (2009) *Interlanguage Pragmatic Development*, Continuum
- Scrivener, J. (2005) *Learning Teaching*, Macmillan
- Selinker, L. (1972) ‘Interlanguage’, in: *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 10:209–31
- Sharwood Smith, M. (1995) *Second Language Learning: Theoretical Foundations*, Longman
- Stern, H. H. (1991) *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press
- Swan, M. and B. Smith (2001) *Learner English*, Cambridge University Press

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Seminar 10

### Learner autonomy and the “good language learner”

- **learner autonomy** – the principle that learners should be encouraged to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it – one of the latest trends in educational psychology
  - Holec (1981) – “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” – this means:
    - (a) determining learning objectives,
    - (b) defining contents and progressions,
    - (c) selecting methods and techniques to be used,
    - (d) monitoring the procedure of acquisition, and finally,
    - (e) evaluating what has been acquired. (ibid)
  - **sources of autonomy** – the concept grew out of constructivism, cognitive psychology (which avers that the effectiveness of learning is greater when the learner integrates knowledge within a personal framework), educational psychology (which links learner autonomy with learner motivation), and communicative language teaching (which puts so much emphasis on the learner being in the centre of attention).
  - driven by a belief that if we want our students to grow up into autonomous beings we must allow them to be autonomous as learners, to learn to be autonomous
    - > a shift from teacher-centred to **learner-centred teaching** (but autonomy doesn’t mean learning without teachers)
  - it depends on the learner’s personality, motivation, his needs and wants, and the constraints of the educational environment – in this context it is very similar to the good language learner (see below)
  - awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses as language learners + appropriate learning strategies
  - **autonomy** must be supported by the teachers – language teaching should incorporate exercises which promote learner autonomy –> this strengthens the learner-teacher rapport, as the teacher can be seen as an informed assistant in the learning process, one who cares whether his students really achieve their goals
  - many theoreticians see **learning** within the framework of autonomy as a **tool** for developing a sound approach to life, they use metaphors in which they liken successful learners to “the artists of their own lives” (Little 1994) and map their development from *effective learners* to *critical thinkers*
- Potential problems:** challenges the traditional role of the teacher; not all learners might want to become autonomous, and responsible for their own learning (some/most(?) just want to pass an exam)

### The good language learner (GLL)

- closely related to the second language identity of the learner
- if we cannot find a fool-proof theory of LA, let’s see what it is that **successful language learners** do and teach it to others – sounds like a good idea but in reality it proves hard to put in practice (BUT! What does success mean? Is it native-like proficiency as the final goal? Fluency but with lots of mistakes? The ability to communicate on just about any topic no matter how correct and accurate the output is? Or painlessly getting to the next level of proficiency? )
- Joan Rubin’s (1975) article “*What the ‘Good Language Learner’ can teach us.*” – she lists three variables – aptitude, motivation and opportunity. As for what the GLL actually does she believes that he is good at **guessing** and inferring meaning; he is determined to get the message across to the extent that he is willing to appear foolish if the need be, and he is very good at **circumlocuting**; he attends to **form**; he **tries out** the target language as much as possible whether in private or with other speakers; he constantly **monitors** his speech; he **attends to meaning**; he has a good store of **learning strategies**.
- **Stern** (1975) – defined 10 strategies of the GLL
  1. *planning strategy* – a personal learning style or positive learning strategy
  2. *active strategy* – an active approach to the learning task
  3. *empathic strategy* – a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and its speakers
  4. *formal strategy* – technical know-how of how to tackle a language
  5. *experimental strategy* – a methodical but flexible approach, developing the new language into an ordered system and constantly revising it
  6. *semantic strategy* – constant searching for meaning
  7. *practice strategy* – willingness to practice
  8. *communication strategy* – willingness to use the language in real communication
  9. *monitoring strategy* – self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use
  10. *internalization strategy* – developing L2 more and more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it

– **Harmer** (2001) – GLLs share the following characteristics:

- a willingness to listen (not just pay attention but also soak up what they hear with eagerness and intelligence);
- a willingness to experiment (take risks, try things out) – feel the urge to use the language;
- a willingness to ask questions;
- a willingness to think about how to learn (employing one's own study skills);
- a willingness to accept correction.

– **Brown's** (2007) characteristics of the GLL:

1. find their own way, taking charge of their learning;
2. organize information about language;
3. are creative, developing a "feel" for the language by experimenting with its grammar and words;
4. make their own opportunities for practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom;
5. learn to live with uncertainty by not getting flustered and by continuing to talk or listen without understanding every word;
6. use mnemonics and other memory strategies to recall what has been learned;
7. make errors work for them and not against them;
8. use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language, in learning a second language;
9. use contextual cues to help them in comprehension;
10. learn to make intelligent guesses;
11. learn chunks of language as wholes and formalized routines to help them perform 'beyond the competence';
12. learn certain tricks that help to keep conversations going;
13. learn certain production strategies to fill in gaps in their own competence;
14. learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation."

### **What can one do to be a good language learner?**

– Cook (1991): 1. Find a learning style that suits you. 2. Involve yourself in the language learning process. 3. Develop an awareness of language both as system and communication. 4. Pay constant attention to expanding your language. 5. Develop the L2 as a separate system. 6. Take into account the demands that L2 learning imposes.

The GLL should:

- plan his language learning
- monitor his progress in language learning regularly
- work on language learning tasks with other people (e.g. friends, people on my course) as well as on his own
- try to find opportunities to practise speaking (even to himself) to improve his fluency
- review his independent study programme regularly and change it when he finds deficiencies
- try to motivate himself by setting weekly or monthly language learning goals, targets etc.
- try to adopt an active approach towards his language learning (not just study when he has to)
- reflect on what he needs to learn to meet his objectives
- review what he's learned at regular intervals
- reflect on how he learns so he can improve his learning methods
- have an organised approach to his language learning and try to think about language in terms of the different categories, systems and patterns within it (e.g. grammar, function, register, vocabulary, sound)
- try to personalise his language learning
- be willing to take risks and be adventurous with language to try out his skills
- try to learn from the mistakes he makes

Whilst these strategies exist in all GLLs, not all of them are necessarily present at the time in all GLLs. We can also not be entirely sure whether it is the GLL's strategies that make the final picture. Also, there is no single good language learner model.

The GLL theory points out one fact of paramount importance: LL happens through **conscious effort** and active and **constant involvement**. It is partly up to the teacher to help his students in this process.

#### **Literature:**

- Cook, V. (1991) *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*, Edward Arnold
- Griffiths, C. (ed.) (2008) *Lessons from Good Language Learners*, Cambridge University Press
- Johnson, K. (ed.) (2005) *Expertise in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, Palgrave Macmillan
- Lamb, T. and H. Reinders (ed.) (2008) *Learner and Teacher Autonomy*, John Benjamins Publishing Company
- Little, D. (2008) 'Knowledge about Language and Learner Autonomy', in May, S. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, Springer, Volume 6, pp.247–259
- Naiman, N. et al. (1996) *The Good Language Learner*, Multilingual Matters
- Nunan, D. (1988) *The Learner Centered Curriculum*, Cambridge University Press
- Rubin, J. (1975) What the "Good Language Learner" Can Teach Us, in TESOL Quarterly, Vol. 9, No. 1, March 1975
- Stern, H.H. (1975) 'What can we learn from the Good Language Learner?', Canadian Modern Language Review, 31, pp. 304–18.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Student evaluation (Spring 2011) – questionnaire and results**

# Language-learning theory and practice for ELT

## Evaluation Form – Summer Term 2011

1. How satisfied I was with the course on the whole (please circle):

1 – Not at all satisfied 2 – Slightly satisfied 3 – Moderately satisfied 4 – Very satisfied 5 – Extremely satisfied

2. I took the course for the following reasons (please choose one option and circle):

1 – The course looked interesting. 2 – The course looked easy.

3 – I'd had long-term interest in the topic. 4 – I just needed some credit points.

3. Overall, this instructor was an effective teacher and clearly communicated the goal and form of the class.

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither agree or disagree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree

4. Overall, I learnt a lot from the course.

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither agree or disagree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree

5. How difficult did you find the course?

1 – Easy 2 – Moderately difficult 3 – Just right 4 – Challenging 5 – Too difficult

6. The amount of information each week was

1 – Too small 2 – Just right 3 – Excessive

7. Most of the information presented was:

1 – Far too familiar to me 2 – Mostly familiar to me 3 – Mostly new to me

8. There was a lot of informational overlap between this course and other courses:

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither agree or disagree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree

9. I found the structure of the course logically organized.

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither agree or disagree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree

10. I found the topics:

1 – totally uninteresting 2 – uninteresting 3 – interesting 4 – very interesting

11. I could see why the presented topics are important for the teaching of foreign languages.

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither agree or disagree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree

12. I picked up useful tips for my own teaching practice.

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither agree or disagree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree 6 – N/A

13. I picked up useful tips for learning foreign languages.

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither agree or disagree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree 6 – N/A

14. I found the topics for presentations:

1 – Unrelated to the course 2 – Badly chosen 3 – Well chosen

15. Did you enjoy preparing your own presentation topic? YES / NO

16. How did you find the handouts?

1 – Unsuitable 2 – Poor 3 – OK 4 – Good 5 – Excellent

17. As a result, I feel inspired to learn more about SLA and/or other topics introduced during the course.

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither agree or disagree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree

18. I believe the course suitably complements the anglistika-amerikanistika programme.

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neither agree or disagree 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly agree

If you like, you can write overleaf whatever you would like to say (e.g. which aspect of the course you did not enjoy and why, if you have any suggestions as to how this course could be improved, if you have any messages for the instructor, anything you minded or especially appreciated, topics you would have liked to see included etc.)

A big THANK YOU for taking the trouble answering such a long questionnaire. I believe it will help me in future years to work on the standard of the course.

I will publish the results of the questionnaire on Moodle so you can see what others thought as well.

Tomáš Gráf  
19 May 2011

**1. How satisfied I was with the course on the whole (please circle):**

1 – Not at all satisfied	0x	
2 – Slightly satisfied	0x	
3 – Moderately satisfied	3x	16%
4 – Very satisfied	11x	58%
5 – Extremely satisfied	5x	26%

AVERAGE: 82%

**2. I took the course for the following reasons (please choose one option and circle):**

1 – The course looked interesting.	4x	21%
2 – The course looked easy.	0x	
3 – I'd had long-term interest in the topic.	14x	74%
4 – I just needed some credit points.	1x	5%

**3. Overall, this instructor was an effective teacher and clearly communicated the goal and form of the class.**

1 – Strongly disagree	0x	
2 – Disagree	0x	
3 – Neither agree or disagree	0x	
4 – Agree	8x	42%
5 – Strongly agree	9x	47%

AVERAGE: 92%

**4. Overall, I learnt a lot from the course.**

1 – Strongly disagree		
2 – Disagree		
3 – Neither agree or disagree	2x	11%
4 – Agree	9x	47%
5 – Strongly agree	8x	42%

AVERAGE: 86%

**5. How difficult did you find the course?**

1 – Easy	1x	5%
2 – Moderately difficult	4x	21%
3 – Just right	13x	68%
4 – Challenging	1x	5%
5 – Too difficult	0x	

**6. The amount of information each week was**

1 – Too small	0x	
2 – Just right	13x	68%
3 – Excessive	6x	32%

**7. Most of the information presented was:**

1 – Far too familiar to me	1x	5%
2 – Mostly familiar to me	2x	11%
3 – Mostly new to me	16x	84%

**8. There was a lot of informational overlap between this course and other courses:**

1 – Strongly disagree	11x	58%
2 – Disagree	7x	37%
3 – Neither agree or disagree	1x	5%
4 – Agree	0x	
5 – Strongly agree	0x	

AVERAGE: 91%

**9. I found the structure of the course logically organized.**

1 – Strongly disagree	0x	
2 – Disagree	0x	
3 – Neither agree or disagree	2x	11%
4 – Agree	14x	74%
5 – Strongly agree	3x	16%

AVERAGE: 81%

**10. I found the topics:**

1 – totally uninteresting			
2 – uninteresting			
3 – interesting	6x	32%	
4 – very interesting	13x	68%	AVERAGE: 92%

**11. I could see why the presented topics are important for the teaching of foreign languages.**

1 – Strongly disagree	0x		
2 – Disagree	0x		
3 – Neither agree or disagree	2x	11%	
4 – Agree	9x	47%	
5 – Strongly agree	8x	42%	AVERAGE: 86%

**12. I picked up useful tips for my own teaching practice.**

1 – Strongly disagree	0x		
2 – Disagree	0x		
3 – Neither agree or disagree	1x	5%	
4 – Agree	9x	47%	
5 – Strongly agree	7x	32%	
6 – N/A	2x	11%	AVERAGE: 87%

**13. I picked up useful tips for learning foreign languages.**

1 – Strongly disagree			
2 – Disagree			
3 – Neither agree or disagree	3x	16%	
4 – Agree	12x	63%	
5 – Strongly agree	3x	16%	
6 – N/A	1x	5%	AVERAGE: 80%

**14. I found the topics for presentations:**

1 – Unrelated to the course	0x		
2 – Badly chosen	0x		
3 – Well chosen	19x	100%	

**15. Did you enjoy preparing your own presentation topic?**

yes	16x	84%	
no	3x	16% (2 students didn't do a presentation)	

**16. How did you find the handouts?**

1 – Unsuitable	0x		
2 – Poor	0x		
3 – OK	0x		
4 – Good	5x	26%	
5 – Excellent	14x	74%	AVERAGE: 95%

**17. As a result, I feel inspired to learn more about SLA and/or other topics introduced during the course.**

1 – Strongly disagree	0x		
2 – Disagree	0x		
3 – Neither agree or disagree	1x	5%	
4 – Agree	8x	42%	
5 – Strongly agree	10x	53%	AVERAGE: 89%

**18. I believe the course suitably complements the anglistika-amerikanistika programme.**

1 – Strongly disagree	0x		
2 – Disagree	0x		
3 – Neither agree or disagree	0x		
4 – Agree	3x	16%	
5 – Strongly agree	16x	84%	AVERAGE: 97%