

Lecture 5: B-Modern Approaches/Methods:**I-Community Language Learning (CLL)/Counselling Learning (1970s-humanistic approach)****II-The Silent Way/Method (Gattegno, 1960s/early 1970s-humanistic approach)****III-Suggestopedia (Lozanov, 1970s-humanistic approach)****I-Community Language Learning (CLL)/Counselling Learning (CL, in the 1970s)****Introduction**

In general, the three above methods are learner-centred and share the importance attached to the learners' feelings and affect for acquisition. In this sense they can be termed *humanistic*, and they do achieve to motivate learners, lower their anxiety and foster their confidence. They were also designed for achieving complete success at language learning. Thus, they were called by Nunan Designer methods (1989).

1.The Emergence of Community Language Learning (CLL)

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Charles Curran, a counsellor and a professor of psychology at Loyola University (Chicago), applied the principles of humanist psychology to language learning. His method, Community Language Learning has students working with authentic materials that they themselves produce, and in small groups through communicative activities, during which they receive practice in negotiating meaning.

The question of how adults learn a second language is at the core of this method. Adults show more inhibitions than children, they tend to analyse what they learn in a conscious way, and have a fear of making mistakes. Curran (1972) noticed anxiety in adult language learners and focused on building a warm and supportive 'community' among learners, gradually moving from dependence on the teacher to complete autonomy. Psychologically speaking, this method arises from Rogers' notions of learners in the role of clients and teachers as counsellors (Rogers, 1980). Linguistically speaking, even though Curran did not put forward any theory of language, his main follower, La Forge (1983) developed the notion of language as a process in which social, personal and cultural factors interact to create the linguistic identity of the human being. Proponents of CLL

deal at great length with what they call an alternative theory of language, which is referred to as Language as Social Process. La Forge (1983) begins by suggesting that language as social process is “different from language as communication”. We are led to infer that the concept of communication that La Forge rejects is the classic sender-message-receiver model. He (1983, p. 3) explained that “communication is more than just a message being transmitted from a speaker to a listener...Communication is an exchange which is incomplete without a feedback reaction from the destinee of the message” (i.e. the receiver).

2. Characteristics of Community Language Learning (CLL)

1-The key concept in the method was non-defensive learning. Non-defensive learning requires six elements: security, aggression (self-assertion: students have opportunities to assert and involve themselves), attention, reflection (students think about both the language and their experience learning it), retention, and discrimination (sorting out differences among target language forms). This can be achieved through the roles that teachers and learners take. Both learners and teacher make decisions in the class. Sometimes the teacher directs action, other times the students interact independently. A spirit of cooperation is encouraged.

2-The use of the learners’ native language is supposed to enhance their security. Students have conversations in their native language; target language translations of these become the text around which subsequent activities revolve. Also, instructions and sessions for expressing feelings are in the learners’ native language with the target language being used progressively more as students advance in their proficiency.

3-Group work has an important function, and these interactions are also recorded and transcribed by the teacher. Learners must then analyse their production and self-correct, if possible.

4-There is no pre-defined syllabus in the classical sense. Students decide what and when to learn according to their needs. The teacher must sometimes discover those needs.

5-The classroom is organised following a U-shape, so that participants can really communicate among themselves. The teacher is always behind the group to help solve linguistic problems, doubts

and hesitations, and to eliminate negative feelings of anxiety or failure (humanistic position: avoidance of anxious situations).

3. Procedures of Community Language Learning (CLL)

Learners would sit in a circle (U-shape) with the teacher standing outside the circle; they would initiate a conversation in L₁. Whenever they had something to say to each other they would call on the teacher and whisper what they wanted to say in the native language (L₁); the teacher translates it into the foreign language (L₂) and helps learners with pronunciation. Once learners felt confident to say the sentence they would record it on a tape. The teacher would take the tape home, script it making all necessary modifications, reproduce it for all learners and then bring it to class to be analysed; students compose further messages in the foreign language with the teacher's help; students reflect about their feelings.

4. Types of Learning and Teaching Activities in Community Language Learning (CLL)

4.1. Translation: a learner whispers a message or meaning s/he wants to express, the teacher translates it into (and may interpret it in) the target language, and the learner repeats the teacher's translation.

4.2. Group work: learners may engage in various group tasks, such as small-group discussion of a topic, preparing a conversation, preparing a summary of a topic for presentation to another group, preparing a story that will be presented to the teacher and the rest of the class.

4.3. Recording: students record conversations in the target language.

4.4. Transcription: students/teachers transcribe utterances and conversations they have recorded for practice and analysis of linguistic forms.

4.5. Analysis: students analyse and study transcriptions of target-language sentences in order to focus on particular lexical usage or on the application of particular grammar rules.

4.6. Reflection and observation: Learners reflect and report on their experience of the class, as a class or in groups. This usually consists of expressions of feelings - sense of one another, reactions to silence, concern for something to say, and so on.

4.7. Listening: students listen to a monologue by the teacher involving elements they might have elicited or overheard in class interactions.

4.8. Free conversation: students engage in free conversation with the teacher or with other learners. This might include discussion of what they learned as well as feelings they had about how they learned.

5. Advantages and Disadvantages of Community Language Learning (CLL)

The goal of the method was to learn language communicatively, to take responsibility for learning (learner-centred approach), never separating intellect (education/learning) from feelings (humanistic approach). To aid the process, the teacher acts as counsellor, supporting students with translation and pronunciation practice, organising the input they create into texts to be studied and by fostering progressive independence through a prescribed sequence of steps. Supporters of CLL emphasise the positive benefits of a method that centers on the learner and stresses the humanistic side of language learning, and not merely its linguistic dimensions. While CLL is not discussed much today, the affective dimension of language learning is widely accepted as relevant to the learners' success in mastering the target language.

However, CLL soon lost its appeal because of the high levels of competence in both languages demanded from teachers, and also because the only innovation was in having learners create their own input. Critics of CLL question the appropriateness of the counseling metaphor, asking for evidence that language learning in classrooms indeed parallels the process that characterizes psychological counseling. Questions also arise about whether teachers should attempt counseling without special training. CLL procedures were largely tested with groups of college-age Americans. The problems and successes experienced by one or two different client groups may not necessarily represent language learning universals. The lack of a syllabus, which makes objectives unclear and evaluation difficult to accomplish, and the focus on fluency rather than accuracy, which may lead to inadequate control of the grammatical system of the target language.

II-The Silent Way/Method (Gattegno, in the 1960s/early 1970s-humanistic approach)

1-The Emergence of the Silent Method

The Silent Way is based on the premise that the teacher should be silent as much as possible in the classroom and the learner should be encouraged to produce as much language as possible. Gattegno (1972) developed this method (in USA) which is partly based on mentalist notions of learning (language learning is a mental activity), and took into account the way children acquire their mother tongue. Thus, in his theory teaching should be learner-centred, and learning was considered as an active, creative problem-solving process in which the use of physical cues was essential. As a materials developer, Gattegno was influenced by Emile-Georges Cuisenaire, a Belgian teacher who invented coloured rods to teach mathematics. Cuisenaire rods which were employed to remember learned material together with the role of silence it attaches to the teacher constitute two of the most well-known techniques of the method. Linguistically speaking, the Silent Way had a structuralist basis, with language being considered as a set of structures and vocabulary, but with a focus on its oral aspects. However, the social function of language was not yet taken into account.

2. Characteristics of the Silent Method

1-Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned. Learning is a problem-solving, creative, discovering activity, in which the learner is a principal actor and an active participant in the learning process (Learner autonomy and self-direction are promoted). This was represented in the words of *Benjamin Franklin*:

Tell me and I forget,

teach me and I remember,

involve me and I learn.

2-Learning is facilitated by accompanying (mediating) physical objects (cuisenaire rods).

3-Humanistic position: Avoidance of anxious situations.

4-View of language as structures and vocabulary. However, structural patterns are practiced in meaningful interactions.

5-All four skill areas are worked on from beginning (reading, writing, speaking, listening).

6-Self-correction is fostered.

7-Teacher is silent most of the time (for almost 90% of the time).

8-Teacher as leader and decision-maker.

9-Use of repetition and translation avoidance.

3. Procedures of the Silent Method

It has a very uniform classroom procedure; first sounds, then words and afterwards sentences are taught through coloured rods of different shapes, which have been previously associated to the different linguistic items (to illustrate the relationships between sound and meaning in the target language). The teacher pronounces each element and asks for its repetition. S/he can use mime to check comprehension or to indicate slight changes in content. Thus, the teacher directs the classroom but has an indirect role, because s/he has to be silent most of the time, giving an active role to the learner. In general, the method follows an audiolingual perspective, as translation is avoided at all costs. However, it also follows mentalist accounts, because self-correction and learner autonomy are promoted.

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Silent Method

Even though the description of language is structuralist, the method seems to have yielded powerful results. However, this same fact – i.e. the overtly grammatical emphasis – was one of the causes of its demise. Also, since teachers had to remain silent for almost 90% of the time, not many teachers felt confident about the method. Lastly, the costs involved in acquiring the materials were also the cause of its lack of popularity. However, most of Gattegno's ideas left a permanent imprint in the field of language teaching. Some of these ideas are: learner-centered instruction, the renewed emphasis on the teaching of pronunciation, the teacher's facilitative role and, more importantly, the idea that learning is more important than teaching in the classroom. Learners come to classrooms to learn what teachers already know so they should be doing most of the work, not the teacher (an active participant).

III-Suggestopedia

1-The Emergence of Suggestopedia (also known as Desuggestopedia)

The late 1960's and early 1970's witnessed the birth of other alternative language teaching methods. Suggestopedia was created by the Bulgarian Psychiatrist Georgi Lozanov (1979). Suggestopedia is derived from Suggestology, which Lozanov defined as a "science ... concerned with the systematic study of the nonrational and/or nonconscious influences" that people face.

Lozanov developed a teaching method based on Yoga, Soviet psychology and the use of music. From Yoga he took some techniques of relaxation, concentration and deep breathing. From Soviet psychology he borrowed the idea that learners can acquire anything, provided they do it in a deep state of concentration, and using the non-conscious and non-rational powers of their mind. Music is used to facilitate this relaxation and to activate the use of the left hemisphere, which is supposed to trigger holistic-global, non-analytic learning. Even though this method had a sound psychological basis, Lozanov did not have a linguistic theory, although he did have a notion of the language to be taught: he focused on L1-L2 pairs and their memorisation, but did not attach a meaningful context to these linguistic items.

2. Characteristics of Suggestopedia

- 1-Focus on unconscious learning, as well as boosting self-esteem.
- 2-Use of yoga techniques to reduce anxiety and facilitate relaxation and concentration.
- 3-Activation of the left brain to foster holistic learning through music.
- 4-The use of language L1-L2 pairs.
- 5-Use of translation and memorisation.
- 6-Oral input before output interactive activities.

3. Procedures of Suggestopedia

The teacher "desuggests" negative feelings and limits to learning; if the teacher succeeds in assuming this role, students assume a somewhat childlike role, spontaneous and uninhibited. To help this process, students learn in a relaxing environment. They choose a new identity (name, occupation) in the target language and culture. They use long dialogues accompanied by their

translations and notes in their native language. The teacher starts with the relaxation of the students through the appropriate music, breathing techniques, classroom furniture and voice of the teacher. Then, students listen to texts and represent different roles using the L2. Translation is also used to foster comprehension. Students are flooded with oral input which they have to learn in an inductive way, and the activities are designed so that they involve the students' interests in such a way they do not provoke mental blocks. Interaction is also employed so that learners are able to use what they have unconsciously acquired.

The teacher is both authority and guide and takes learners through a series of experiences which include reading the long dialogue to the rhythm of baroque music, then reading it again with music as a background but at normal speed, and then engaging learners in play with the new language. The classroom is completely atypical (unusual): soft lights, easy chairs, wall to wall carpeting, beautiful artwork on the walls interspersed with carefully produced grammar charts, and other aids to memory. There are no tests, which would threaten relaxed environment. Errors are not immediately corrected; the teacher models correct forms later during class.

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Suggestopedia

The main goal of suggestopedia was to help learners learn, at an accelerated pace, a foreign language for everyday communication by tapping mental powers, overcoming psychological barriers. Despite its appeal, this method soon weakened its position in the field due to many factors such as:

- 1-The high cost of tuition (teaching fees).
- 2-The need for it to operate with groups whose mother tongue was the same.
- 3-The demands on the teacher who had to be knowledgeable about teaching, counselling and performing.
- 4-The fact that while learners gained a lot of fluency the gains in accuracy were very few.

Conclusion

All the three methods have received either enthusiastic support or criticism, and, concerning their actual success, results have been poor. In addition, the three require very specific teacher

training, provide insufficient material and are very demanding for teachers. Besides, they lack a clear linguistic theory, so they tend to adopt a traditional grammatical orientation, particularly in the case of the Silent Way. Community Language Learning, with its absence of syllabus, and the lack of conventional materials, is hard to put into practice, whereas Suggestopedia requires the same efforts because of different reasons: achieving complete relaxation of the students is not easy. Also, both are designed for adults, rather than children or teenagers. The Silent Way is also harder to implement with small children, who tend to need more verbal directions on the part of the teacher and are less autonomous. Besides, many teachers find it difficult to conduct a classroom without speaking. On the whole, even though the three methods show poor results, if considered as techniques within a global programme, they will have many advantages, introducing very useful activities, changing the classroom routine and providing the learner with an active role, while at the same time respecting his/her feelings and reducing his/her anxiety.

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