

THE ELT SYLLABUS IN IRAQ PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This piece of work is the accumulation of over 30 years of involvement with EFL teaching as a teacher, teacher trainer, specialist in curriculum design as well as a three-month attachment at the Institute for English Language Education (IELE), the University of Lancaster, England and a six-week course in Social Studies and Syllabus Design at New York University (NYU) in New York, USA.

This work is of crucial importance at this time, because Iraq is on the verge of making radical change in all matters related to English Language Teaching in the country even if it meant an entirely new syllabus and text book materials with whatever this entails of change of methodology and teacher

* I'm deeply indebted to Mr. Tom Hutchinson of IELE under whose supervision this research was carried out and who offered me free access to piles of invaluable information that forms the backbone of this paper.

training. It is hoped that an in-depth study like this will not go unnoticed.

PROPOSED INTRODUCTION TO NEW SYLLABUS

A. Why the Change?

The present series of books New English Course for Iraq (NECI) was first put into use in the early 1970s. The philosophy adopted for the setting up of the syllabus is the behaviourist approach, the syllabus is structurally organised, and so are the materials, the recommended method is naturally the audio-lingual method which makes the best to fit in with this particular structure of the material. This change was made when the behaviourist approach to language learning was in vogue and the structural basis to syllabus design and materials production was the most common. It was all done in good faith and with the belief that the approach was the best for that time. However, since then a great deal of research and theoretical development in the fields of language and language learning carried out during the last two decades has led to new insights and a new understanding of the three aspects that crucially influence the building up of the syllabus, the writing of the materials and the methodology used. These three aspects are:

1. The nature of language.
2. The nature of the language learning process.

3. The context in which learning takes place.

The government on its part being always keen on updating the content of education to encompass all new developments has reached the conclusion that change is due. This introduction aims to explain in more detail the need for change by describing the changes in the three areas noted above.

B. The Current Situation

The syllabus now in use in our schools is one based on the structural approach to language teaching, drawing on the Behaviourist view of language and the learning process; it is necessary to discuss this approach first.

The mere structuralists' definition of language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which people of a given community communicate and interact summarises their attitude towards language. The salient features here that we initially stress are that the language is a system, i.e., one system: that it is arbitrary: that it is made of vocal symbols, vocal with no mention of written and finally that it is used for interaction and communication. To shed more light on the structuralists' stand towards language it is useful to quote the three basic principles of this view as stated by Hutchinson (personal communication). These, in order of importance are:

1. The whole is equal to the sum of the parts. In order to understand language you have to reduce it to its most basic form and then build it up again. Hutchinson uses the analogy of a machine. In order to understand it, it has to be broken down into its minimal segments then reassembled. Thus if the sentence is taken as the basic unit of language a structuralist will look at it in this way:

phoneme word phrase clause
sentence.

This means that a sentence consists of at least one clause: a clause consists of at least one phrase: a phrase consists of one or more words: a word consists of at least one phoneme which was identified as the smallest meaningful unit of a language. (In written language the morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit). This is the reason why Hutchinson prefers the term "segmental" to refer to this school of language description.

The same principle is held to be valid towards language teaching on all its levels from syllabus design to assessment, i.e., in order to learn a language it is necessary to break it down into its minimal parts.

2. Speech is the primary form of language and linguistic analysis should be based on a corpus of collected examples of language use. The argument for this is that speech existed long before writing and some languages even do not have a

written form. We learn to speak before we learn to write. Thus, while for the traditional prescriptive grammarian speech is considered as inferior to the written language, to the structuralists descriptive grammarian speech is the basic form of communication while writing is held to be a refined and artificial use of that basic form. This primacy of speech led to the adoption of the Audiolingual method and to the order of the four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

3. Linguistics should concern itself with form and substance, not meaning. It was thought that in order to provide a scientific basis for the analysis and description of language meaning has to be excluded because it does not yield itself easily to scientific analysis. It sufficed to concentrate only on form (syntax) and substance (phonology and lexis).

The Inadequacies of Structuralism

Structuralism came under attack as long ago as the late fifties. Here are some of the arguments against the principles outlined above:

1. Language is more than just the sum of the parts. We cannot understand how language works by just breaking it down, in the same way as we cannot understand how any machine works by merely taking it apart and assembling it. There are other relations between the

parts that are crucial to the understanding of how the language or the machine works. This is why transformation generative grammarians analyse language through the use of tree diagrams (phrase-markers). They adopt Chomsky's conclusion that language is organised *hierarchically* and not segmentally, and such trees are necessary to show the domination of each category on the ones below. (Figure 1).

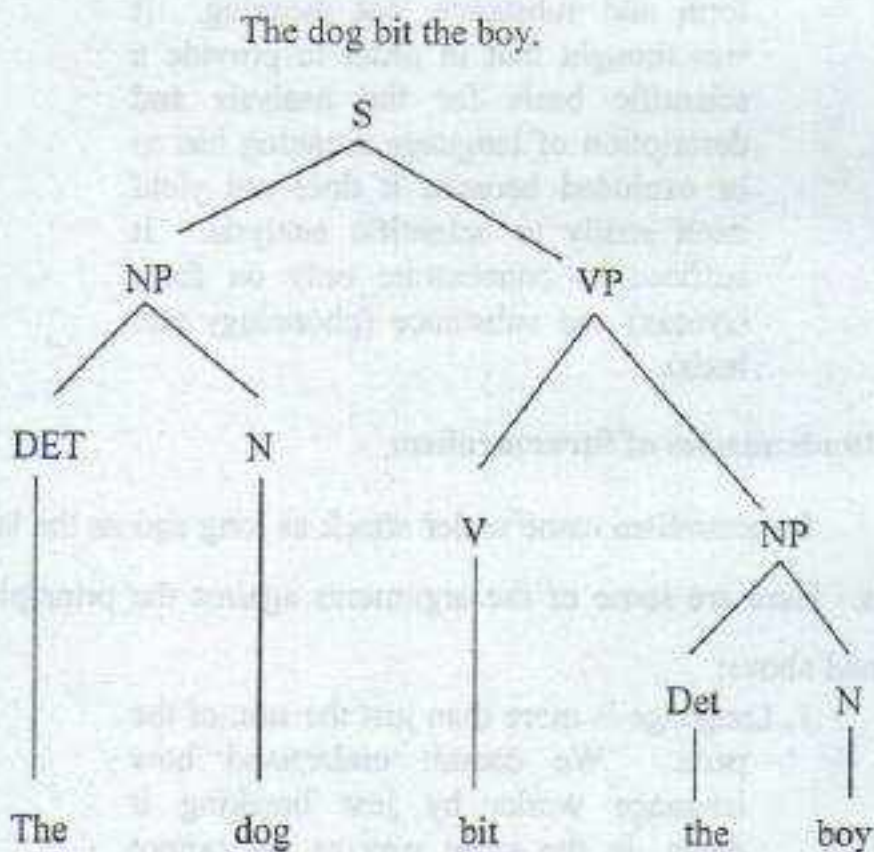


Figure (1)

2. The second important thing that structuralism fails to account for is the fact that some sentences may seem structurally different while they actually have similar meaning and on the other hand seemingly similar sentences may have different meanings. To take our example above

The dog bit the boy

The boy was bitten by the dog.

Although these sentences are structurally different they actually explain the same situation where "the dog" did the biting and "boy" was on the receiving end. In order to account for such a phenomenon Chomsky introduced the idea of surface structure and deep structure. Thus although the two sentences above have different surface structures they both have the same deep structure. On the other hand if we consider Chomsky's frequently quoted examples:

John is easy to please

John is eager to please

we can state that both of these sentences have the surface structure.

N Verb Adj to plus verb

However, it is easy to detect a basic difference in meaning. While in the first sentence someone other than *John* has to do the pleasing in the second one *John* is the person to do it.

3. Chomsky also argued that structuralism neglects the principle that language is rule-governed behaviour. The words and phonemes of a language cannot be simply thrown together in an arbitrary sequence. Halliday extended this concept to incorporate the concept of a network of systems that language users have in order to use the language satisfactorily. Systemic Grammar stressed the existence and interrelationship between different systems in the language. Thus Chomsky's sentence

Colourless green ideas sleep furiously

even though apparently grammatical is obviously unacceptable. Of greater significance for language teaching as far as structuralism is concerned what Hutchinson (personal communication) called "the fatal flaw" in the application of the segmental view of language to language teaching which was to assume that a means of describing what language is is also an appropriate way of describing the process whereby someone learns a language—that a methodology for analysing and describing can be used as a methodology for teaching. The structuralists took the language machine

apart and then put it back together again. The mistake was to assume that taking the machine apart and giving learners the individual bits until they got the whole machine was an effective way of learning. The systemic view of language contradicts this assumption, since it stressed the importance of the interdependence of language items.

Language Learning

Problems: Before indulging in the discussion of the model of language learning it is very important to take into consideration some of the problems involved in studying the process of language learning in general and second language learning in particular as outlined by Hutchinson (personal communication).

Such problems are:

1. Learning is not observable. What we can observe is the final product or the lack of it. The process of movement from not knowing is a mystery. We do not know what takes place inside the learner's mind.
2. Learning is a complex process which may be affected by a very wide range of variables: age, context, previous experience, relationship with teacher, feelings, etc. If learning does or does not succeed, how does the researcher know which of the factors was significant?

3. Learning is not replicable. The same person cannot learn the same thing twice in different ways. We cannot, therefore, compare different ways of learning something.
4. Language learning as opposed to other kinds of learning is complicated by the fact that there are three main contexts (plus various combinations of the three) in which languages are learnt:
 - as a mother tongue
 - as a second language informally through contact with speakers of the language
 - as a foreign language formally through instruction.

The problem thus created is how far conclusions from one form of learning can be taken as valid for the other contexts. How far does first language learning resemble second language learning? What is the effect of formal instruction in second language learning?

Models of Language Learning

The Behaviourist Model

In this section we are going to discuss two models of language learning. The first of which is the one that has dominated the world of language teaching for the last thirty years is that of habit-formation. This model has its deepest

roots in Pavlov's *conditioned response* and Watson's contention that human behaviour should be studied *objectively*, rejecting mentalistic notions of innateness and instinct. Skinner perfected the model by adding a new dimension to it, namely that of reinforcement. Littlewood (1987:3) points out four components of the process of habit formation:

1. The child *imitates* the sounds and patterns he hears around him.
2. People recognise the child's attempt as being similar to the adult models and *reinforce* (reward) the sounds, by approval or some other desirable reaction.
3. In order to obtain more of these rewards, the child *repeats* the sounds and patterns, so that these become habits.
4. In this way the child's verbal behaviour is *continued* (or "shaped") until the habits coincide with the adult models.

One very important aspect of Behaviourist ideology that is worth mentioning here is the attitude towards "mistakes". Rather than recognising them as part of the learner's own system, they are regarded as "defective" or faulty versions of adult speech.

As regards the learning of a second language there is an additional complicating factor which is the learner's first/native language or mother tongue of whose habits the learner already possesses a set. The Behaviourist/Structuralist answer to this predicament is the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis which claims that the principal barrier to second language acquisition is the interference of the first language system with the second language system, and that a scientific structural analysis of the two languages in question would yield a taxonomy of linguistic contrasts between them which in turn would enable the linguist to predict the difficulties a learner would encounter. In other words when there is similarity between the two languages learning is facilitated and these elements will be "simple" for the learner through *positive transfer*. However, where the elements are different the first language habits will interfere with the learning of the target ones, i.e., hinder it, and these elements will be "difficult" for the learner through *interference* of the mother tongue. In this way second language learning basically involves the overcoming of *differences* between the two linguistic systems—the native and the target languages. (cf. Brown 1987, Rutherford, 1987). There exist two forms of this hypothesis, a strong and a weak form (Ellis, 1986). The strong form claims that all second language errors can be predicted by identifying the differences between the second language and the learner's

native language. This form was toned down to a mere diagnostic one after research had shown that many errors produced by second language learners could not be attributed to the native language. The weak form claims that Contrastive Analysis can account for the major part of errors produced by the language learner. However, both the Behaviourist Approach and its strong arm the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis were proved to be lacking in many crucial aspects of the language process as outlined in the following section.

Criticism of the Behaviourist Model

and Contrastive Analysis

The immense amount of research carried out during the last two decades has yielded unquestionable evidence as to the weaknesses and the inadequacies of the Behaviourist Model and the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. Regarding the Behaviourist Model Hutchinson (personal communication) finds fault with it in three aspects:

1. The basic weakness of the Behaviourist view is that it cannot account for how learners achieve from responses to individual utterances the grasp of the whole system of rules that enables them to recognise or select the appropriate form for any given situation. Language

use is a creative activity. This creativity relies upon the language user's ability to apply the system of rules that underlie the language. Learning must, therefore be a process of building the rule system of the language from individual child's utterances.

2. Learning requires understanding. Imitation—however well rewarded—will not, of itself, produce understanding. But without understanding what one is saying learning is impossible.
3. Children produce meaningful utterances that they have never heard. Referring to Halliday's (1975) study of child language as a good representative of evidence of his own three-year-old daughter, Katy, Hutchinson points out that it might be argued that such uses are errors, imperfect forms of adult speech. But such a view cannot be maintained, when we see that Katy uses such utterances systematically and appropriately. They are not just imperfect versions of what she has heard. They are her *own* creation.

Hutchinson concludes that the habit formation view is too simple to account for the immensely complex process of learning a language. It depends too much on the input of performance data and leads inevitably to the conclusion that one can only learn something that he has previously been exposed

to. Apart from the fact that it simply is not possible for a learner to be exposed to every utterance he/she will require, it denies the essential creativity of language. Creativity is only possible through the operation of a system of rules (competence), but the learner is not exposed to rules. He/she is exposed only to applications of the rules (performance). For learners to obtain knowledge of the rule system from performance data, they must be actively involved in a process of extrapolating the rules for themselves from that data. The keyword here is *activity*, because it exposes the fundamental weakness of the habit formation theory which is based on a view of the learner as a passive receiver of knowledge. Such a view simply does not accord with the evidence of learner language use. Littlewood (1978:6) sums up the point as follows:

From the outset, the children seem to be constructing their own rule-system which they gradually adapt in the direction of the adult system. This means that the child's language is not simply being shaped by external forces: it is being *creatively constructed* by the child as he creatively interacts with those around him.

As for the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis criticisms of it were of three major types based on three considerations: empirical, theoretical and practical (Ellis, 1986:27).

Empirically, research in the analysis of learners' errors has revealed not only interference errors but four types of errors of which those traced to the native language of the learner was the least, as in the Dulay and Burt studies and far less than half the number of the errors made by the learner in most other studies (cf. Ellis for a survey of such studies). Research in interlanguage has revealed an immense number of errors in the production of language learning that could not be attributed to either the native language or the target language. There is also a lot of controversy as to what errors are to be identified as interference ones (i.e., those attributed to the use of the structure of the native language) or developmental errors (those that do not reflect native language structure but are found in first language acquisition data). Evidence has proved that there are many errors that have both characteristics. For instance, the omission of the copula in equational sentences e.g., the structuralists' favourite argument about the presence of interference errors in Arabic-speaking learners of English, has been found to exist in first language acquisition data as well as in the data of second language performances of learners whose

native language already possesses the copula in its system (Al-Jumaily, 1982). (For evidence in the data of Spanish speakers see Felix, 1980). Even allowing for the problems of identifying the causes of errors, Ellis (1986:30) concludes that "first language interference is probably not the prime cause of learner errors. The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis together with habit formation theory is not capable of providing an adequate explanation of second language acquisition".

Theoretically Contrastive Analysis was challenged on the grounds that there was no theoretical basis for "translation equivalence". It also fails to account for learner variability. It has been shown that language-learner language is characterised by considerable contextual and situational variability. Theoretically, then, Contrastive Analysis needs to incorporate the variability of language use into its framework. It needs to predict the particular non-linguistic and linguistic contexts in which transfer errors are likely to occur. (Ellis, 1986:32)

Finally, and for us very importantly the practical worth of Contrastive Analysis to language teachers is questioned. Although the fact that a majority of learner errors are not caused by interference strikes at the very foundation of Contrastive Analysis and renders it of limited value, the main doubt from a pedagogic point of view arises from its attitude to the role of

error in language learning. The very existence of Contrastive Analysis was based on the need to avoid error, on the view that they are the result of imperfect learning. But error is now seen as a positive aspect. It is seen as evidence of the learner continuously hypothesising and testing his hypotheses about the target language. If error is seen in this light as it should be, the importance of devising a teaching programme geared to its prevention becomes less obvious.

The Creative Construction Model

An alternative to the Behaviourist habit-formation model is the Creative Construction Model of learning which stems from the mentalist theory that language is a mental phenomenon which can only be explained in terms of how the human mind works. The beginnings of this theory are marked by Chomsky's attack on the Behaviourist theory and the establishing of the Transformational-Generative Grammar. Brown (1973) studying learners learning English as a first language declared that they develop through a process of "creative construction". Dulay and Burt in several studies duplicated Brown's experiment on children learning English as a second language. The results of their experiments with the high proportion of developmental errors led them to decide that:

1. The process of habit formation is as inadequate for explaining second language as it is for first language learning.
2. Children learning a second language like their first language counterparts, develop through a process of "creative construction".

The process is based on the attitude that language is rule-governed. Therefore, learning a language must be the process of acquiring the rules. Hutchinson (personal communication) points out a number of points the process raises which are of relevance if we are to apply the process to second language acquisition.

1. LAD: This is the shortened form of the term Language Acquisition Device, which is, as proposed by Chomsky, pre-programmed to find the grammar of the mother tongue. This human species specific device may already contain some of the universals which are found in all languages to enable it to operate so quickly. Littlewood (1987:7) points out that though the use of the term "LAD" has become less common, "few people would question the basic notion that children possess an innate ability to acquire language".

2. Interlanguage: Research in the production of language learners has revealed evidence that learners obviously do not proceed directly from the state of ignorance to a state of complete knowledge. Rather evidence shows that they go through a series of stages gradually approximating the target form. These stages have been given different names, *Interlanguage* (Selinker, 1972), *Idiosyncratic Dialects* (Corder, 1971), *Language Learners Language* (1978), *Approximative Systems* (Nemser, 1971). In an interlanguage state, the learner will use apparently "incorrect" and "inappropriate" forms. Looked at as part of a developmental process, however, these forms cannot be seen as errors—defective versions of the target forms. They are rather manifestations of the current state of the learner's developing system. They show that learning is taking place. They are in fact hypotheses the learner is putting forward to be tested against feedback. Therefore, they are not merely evidence of learning, they are a necessity for learning. Use of interlanguage forms are an essential aid to achieving native speaker competence.
3. Communicative Competence: What drives a learner to learn? What is the motivation for the learner to attain native-like competence? What is the nature of the rules that the learner

seeks to establish? In the mentalist tradition, the answer will be the syntactic rules. But even if it is so, the question remains as to why he learns them. The answer will certainly be that he does so to fulfil his own needs and to communicate these needs to other people. In order to achieve this, learners must share meaning with other human beings. They will use any available information to achieve this end. In the Creative Construction view learners proceed from meaning to form. Therefore, as Hutchinson asserts, in this procedure the attainment of grammatical competence is not the *motive* that drives the LAD, but rather the *result* of the drive to communicate. It is less a cause than a symptom of developing communicative competence. Thus, although it may give us insights into the progress of a learner, we must be wary of drawing conclusions from it as to the nature of the conditions for making it happen. In first language this need not concern us, but in second language, where we are consciously trying to create the conditions for learning, there is a danger of looking through the wrong end of the telescope (Ibid.).

4. Cognitive Processes: Cognitive processes are not the only factor to take into account in the learning of a language. The communicative need outlined above is not enough to

drive the learners to attain target-like competence. A skeleton of rules and reduced forms of language (i.e., pidgins and unmarked structures) will be enough to satisfy that end. Sociolinguistic studies indicate that language is not just a means of communication it is an instrument of social identity. In order for the learner to identify himself with a certain speech community he has to conform as closely as possible to the norms of that community. Language learning, in other words, is as much an emotional as a cognitive process. Again, though interesting in first language, the implications for second language are greater, since in second language we are consciously trying to generate the conditions of learning. If we start from the basis that only cognitive processes need to be considered, we may be omitting vital factors.

5. Interaction: Since learning a language in the classical mentalist model is seen in terms of internal processes input is given very limited or even no role at all. Indeed, Chomsky dismisses input as an important factor by proposing the LAD and claiming that the data the child is exposed to is "degenerate". However, this view is now strongly challenged. Research has proved that the language the child is exposed to is far from being random or

degenerate. Such studies indicate that "motherese" as the language the child is exposed to is called, has its own characteristic structure which is remarkably well-formed, containing few ungrammatical utterances or segment fragments. Other characteristics include a lower mean length of utterance, the use of sentences with a limited range of grammatical relations, few subordinate and coordinate constructions, more simple sentences, the occurrence of tutorial questions (i.e., questions to which the mother already knows the answer), and overall, a high level of redundancy (Ellis, 1986). It also appears that adults and older children respond to the child's own attempts at language in a particular way. This is what Corder (1978) refers to as the user's ability to move up and down the continuum of complexity responding to the demand of the situation.

This evidence indicates that not only are children predisposed to learn languages, but also older members of the society are predisposed to help them do so. Such evidence, Hutchinson asserts, can only indicate that language learning is the product of *interaction* between the learner's own cognitive/affective mechanism and the input (both linguistic and non-linguistic) from its environment. Or as Ellis (1986:132)

reports the reappraisal of the role of the linguistic environment in first language acquisition

It came to be seen to serve as far more than just a trigger to activate innate processing mechanisms and led to an interactionist interpretation of development.

In second language learning such role is taken by what Corder calls "teacher-talk" and which Krashen (1982:59) describes as "comprehensible input". This register with characteristics somewhat similar to those of "motherese" but with different levels of adjustment plays the same role in promoting second language learning as that played by "motherese" in first language learning. The success of the teacher's adjustment may have its crucial effect on the success of the teaching/learning process as Krashen (op. cit.) puts it:

The value of second language classes, then, lies not only in the grammar instruction, but in the "teacher talk", the comprehensible input. It can be an efficient place to achieve at least the intermediate levels rapidly, as long as the focus of the class is on providing input for acquisition.

The creative construction view is clearly not a homogeneous body of knowledge. Therefore, it has been interpreted in different ways in second language teaching.

leading in practice to two major methodological approaches: learning as skill development and learning as unconscious acquisition.

Developments in Language Teaching

Taking into account the developments outlined above we can see that there are three major approaches to language teaching now that could be recognised as influential in this field. The first of these is the one that dominated post World War II language teaching up to the late sixties and still has some telling influence on some of the modern teaching courses. This approach which has been the one in use in Iraq for the last twenty five years or so is a combination of a habit-formation view of learning and a version of Structuralist Linguistics combined into the Audiolingual-Aural-oral method of language teaching. Some of the basic features of this approach were:

1. A segmental view of language in which the starting point is the phoneme from which one is to work up to larger units.
2. Translation is prohibited because second language learning meant developing a new form of verbal behaviour. Thus the learner's existing native language habits had to be suppressed since the use of the first language forms was seen as interference.

3. The new language in all its aspects should be learnt in the sequence: hear, speak, read and write, which was intended to reflect the order of the acquisition of the first language.
4. Language should be decontextualised to make the form more obvious. Meaning was not given much emphasis.
5. The primary teaching technique was the substitution drill which put into practice the SRR (stimulus-response reinforcement) process.

It is very difficult to judge the success or failure of this approach on the merit of the results of the learners for two main reasons:

- a. Even though admittedly many people learnt language through this method, it is not known whether this was because of or in spite of the method.
- b. It is difficult to say how far teachers actually applied the method in its full rigour. There is no doubt that frequently older techniques from the grammar/translation method were used by many teachers through the incorporation of translation grammar explanations and the like.

Hutchinson draws attention to the fact that the Audiolingual Method represented a fortuitous coincidence of a number of superficially attractive factors which are:

- a. The behaviourist view of learning meant that the language data itself had to be broken down into small discrete units: sound and structures, a demand which the prevailing segmental view of language easily met.
- b. Structuralism saw form and substance as the most important aspects of language. Unlike meaning these features can be easily bent to the requirements of the language drill. Structuralism left meaning out of account.
- c. Structuralism saw speech as primary. Mimicking the first language procedure of hear, speak, read, write conformed to this.
- d. Some of the linguists' own descriptive techniques, such as the minimal pair and the substitution table were put to pedagogic use.
- e. The possibility of using technological devices such as the language laboratory did much to popularise the drill as a technique saying nothing of the commercial drive to sell the language laboratories.

- f. The social attitude towards education after World War II favoured a method of this sort of rigid discipline where the teacher is in control, the learners are obediently repeating, and no regard is allowed for individual needs.
- g. Assessment was relatively simple, since only knowledge of sentence structure and minimal pairs were tested. But this had also its drawbacks. The ease of testing exerted considerable pressure on teaching materials and methods to focus on the tested items—minimal pairs and structures.

The view of learning, that learning a second language should be a recreation of the context of first language in the classroom has been rejected as too superficial. The Audiolingual Method in its most rigid form has gradually lost ground to approaches based on the creative construction view of language learning. Here, as Hutchinson points out, the picture becomes much more complicated for two main reasons:

- a. Many of the assumptions of the habit formation model, such as the use of the language drill, are still retained in much pedagogic practice.
- b. There are two ways of realising the creative construction view in language teaching materials and methodology.

These two views can be discerned from Krashen's distinction between *acquisition* and *learning*. In the former development occurs spontaneously and subconsciously while the learner's attention is on other matters. An example of such a model is the learning of a second language in a natural situation, in its habitat, without formal instruction. In the latter, however, development is susceptible to guidance and training, i.e., the learner consciously focuses on the task of learning pre-selected items of language. The first view is acquisition based while the second is skill-development based. Krashen's theory is that acquisition and learning feed into separate systems which perform different functions. Acquisition, to him, is the only true way of obtaining ability in a language. Knowledge obtained consciously can only act as "a monitor" to improve the formal correctness of the language. However, the availability of sufficient time is essential for this knowledge to function. This would explain why learners often produce structures more correctly when there is no time-pressure but produce deviant forms when they have to communicate spontaneously. In other words, this type of knowledge will not enable the learner to generate language use. Table One summarises the differences between the three approaches.

However far divided these approaches may appear, most modern approaches to language teaching, in fact, adopt some elements of each one. Hutchinson points out a number of reasons for such an eclectic approach.

1. What actually happens in the classroom is not simply the content and method of the textbook. Teachers differ in personal style, experience and work context. It is very difficult to find out what people actually do in classrooms, since researchers cannot tell how normal their teaching is when observed.
2. It is not yet known for sure how people learn a second language. Ultimately, therefore, much of what is done in the classroom is based on faith rather than knowledge.
3. Much of what is done in classrooms has little to do with concepts of the means of learning, but is concerned with the purpose of learning and the administrative demands of the educational system. As mentioned above one of the strongest attractions of the Audiolingual Method is that it makes testing easy. In a system which gives importance to standardised testing elements of this method will survive regardless of the expressed view of language learning.
4. Learners have expectations as to how teaching should be carried out.

These expectations usually derive from their earlier experience in learning. They may, therefore, react strongly against a methodology such as the process based because it does not match with their concept of the teaching/learning process.

5. Different learners learn in different ways. Some like to have rules—because they feel lost without them. Others find them boring and confining. An eclectic methodology would seem to provide for these two.
6. The method professed and/or used by a particular teacher may not be the deciding factor in determining the success or failure of teaching. There may well be intangible unobservable human qualities in teachers and learners which are crucial.

From the view discussed above what we find is that:

- a. Language learning is a more complex task than what we have originally thought.
- b. It is a far less “tidy” task to classify into segments.
- c. Errors are part of the process of learning. They are manifestations of the learner’s interlanguage. Learners do not process immediately from complete ignorance “not knowing” to “complete knowing”. Duley and Burt’s title “You cannot learn without goofing”.

- d. There is lots of variation in terms of learning between one learner and another.
- e. The classroom is not just a channel for the passage of knowledge from teacher to learner but is an interaction between teachers materials and learners. The learning process is best reflected in the figure below:

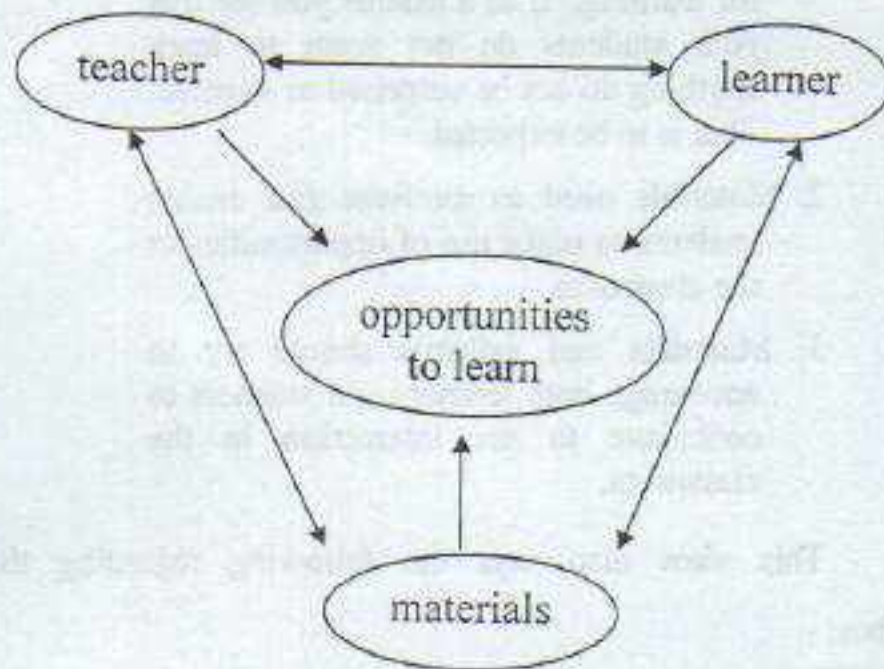


Figure (2)

After Dick Allwright's figure.

The positive characteristics of this model are:

1. It is not linear.
2. It is dynamic and interactive.
3. The classroom only provides *opportunities to learn*. The learner may take it or leave it. It requires active participation on the part of the learners. It is not a passive model as the input model is.

Taking this as the view of what happens in the classroom the implications for materials and syllabuses are the following:

1. The syllabus and materials do not determine learning. They merely

provide opportunities or a framework for learning. If as a teacher you see that your students do not seem to learn anything do not be surprised or worried. That is to be expected.

2. Materials need to motivate and enable students to make use of opportunities in the classroom.
3. Materials and syllabus should try to encourage both learners and teachers to contribute to the interaction in the classroom.

This view also says the following regarding the syllabus:

1. The role of the syllabus here is to provide the framework for the creation of learning opportunities.
2. The principle role of the syllabus is to guide materials writers, to help them and make their job easier towards the creating of materials that will provide opportunities to test writers to create the suitable tests.
3. It should provide an explicit statement of objectives so that everybody engaged in the process all the way down the line will be aware of what the English language teaching programme is trying to achieve.
4. The syllabus also has a role in teacher development because it aims to be a

statement of our existing state of knowledge about language and language learning.

5. Finally the syllabus is not a once for all final statement of knowledge but one which through use will be evaluated and modified in its term.

Conclusion

The need for syllabus reform thus stems from developments in our knowledge about the nature of language and the learning process. These developments, however, indicate that learning a foreign language is an immensely complex and rather untidy process. The design of a syllabus and teaching materials must reflect these developments in our knowledge.

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