

BLOCK 3.

Back to the past (2).

The 19th century: The century of “methods”

Sub-block 3.2.

The Natural Approach from the 19th century

Unit 3.2.2. Individual pre-reformers

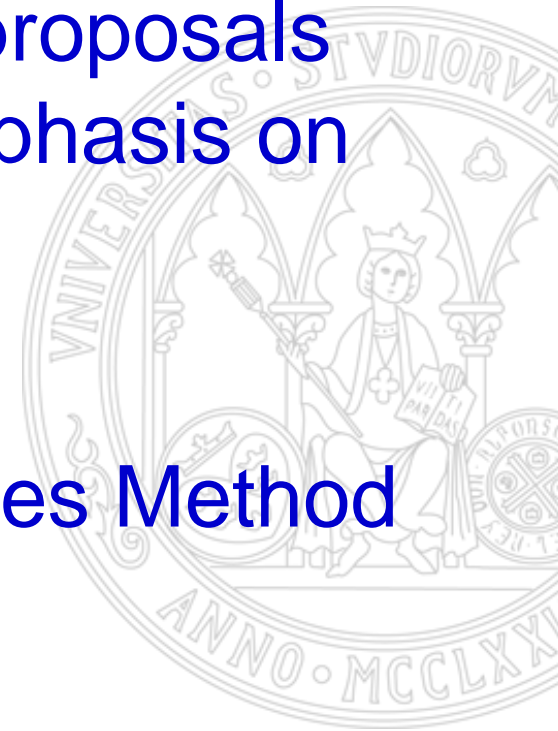
Outline

1. Objectives of this unit
2. Brief historical background
3. N. Dufief
4. J. Jacotôt
5. C. Marcel
6. T. Prendergast
7. R. S. Rosenthal
8. F. Gouin



1. Objectives of this unit

1. Know the most important authors prior to the Reform Movement and the main features of their pedagogical proposals and methods, with special emphasis on Gouin.
2. Critically analyse Gouin's Series Method



2. Brief historical background



Remember from Sub-block 3.1 and Unit 3.2.1:

- *Not all learners could be expected to learn a foreign language through the academic 'grammar school' education or traditional education.*
- *A new class of learner emerged in the 19th century due to historical reasons:*
 - *changes in patterns of transport*
 - *emigration to the USA*
 - *industrialization of the second half of the nineteenth century*



need to be orally proficient in foreign languages

PEDAGOGICAL CONSEQUENCES (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 7)

- 1) Emergence of conversation books and phrase books for adult private study
- 2) Language teaching specialists' concern about the way that modern languages were taught in secondary education.



Individual pre-reformers who paved the way for the Reform Movement. Their new methods and ideas did not have a long impact but they are very interesting to study from a historical perspective.

3. N. Dufief (1776-1834)

✓ 1804: *Nature displayed in her mode of teaching languages to man... Adapted to FRENCH.*

✓ His motto is summarised in Pope's poem:

*First follow Nature, and your judgement frame
By her just standard, which is still the same...*

It is evident that the rules of Grammar cannot convey the art of language... How then is language to be acquired? I answer by adopting the mode by which nature teaches children their mother tongue.

(Dufief, 1804: xci)

3. N. Dufief (1776-1834)

- ✓ Pedagogical principles (Sánchez, 1997: 113):
 - a) Emphasis on the oral language
 - b) Emphasis on repetition as a way to educate the ear and facilitate memorisation
 - c) Emphasis on oral repetition (closing textbooks if necessary so as to have the students' attention undivided)
 - d) Cyclical repetition of sentences or their parts to obtain storage in memory
 - e) Emphasis on use and sentences practice (often functional)
 - f) Practice supplemented by morphological and syntactic analysis
 - g) Skills integration: speaking, reading, writing, understanding
 - h) Activation of the memory capacity.

- ✓ The “refined” version of Ollendorff’s “New Method”: More varied and more motivating than Ollendorff’s “practical method”, but quite more complicated to implement for a teacher.



4. J. Jacotôt (1770-1840)

- ✓ *Enseignement Universel, Langue Maternelle* (1823)
- ✓ *Enseignement Universel, Langue Étrangère* (1830)
- ✓ Key methodological principle: “Tout est dans tout”

“Nothing is entirely new; everything pre-exists in certain basic nuclei of knowledge that need only be made explicit through induction and deduction” (Titone, 1968: 23).

This resembles Comenius’ *Great Didactics* but unlike the former Jacotôt emphasises “the organic character of knowledge whereby new notions can be deduced from previously acquired knowledge” (Titone, 1968: 22).

In this way, Jacotôt is a forerunner of the 20th century psychopedagogical current of “constructivism”.

- ✓ Jacotôt attempts to find the method that would allow any teacher to teach any subject. As Titone (1968: 23) indicates, at the beginning it was meant to be used for teaching reading and foreign languages, but it can easily be applied to teaching any subject. Hence, “a method of universal teaching”.

4. J. Jacotôt (1770-1840)

- ✓ Jacotôt believes that a foreign language should be learnt as the mother tongue but with the addition of carefully selected practice activities:
 - Memorisation and repetition of a text followed by its literal translation to grasp the meaning of words, later accompanied by analytical exercises to allow the learner to deduce implicit grammar rules.
 - Everything learned in this way must be compared to the previously acquired knowledge.
- ✓ Jacotôt's method has been called an “analytic-synthetic method of concentration” (Geerts & Missine, 1964: 546, quoted in Titone, 1968: 23).



Can you explain what the “analytic-synthetic method of concentration” is?

Most of his teaching principles are actually the ‘best’ educational contributions made by most of the seventeenth- and eighteenth- century reformers (Titone, 1968: 23-24).

5. C. Marcel (1793-1896)

- Proposed a Rational Method in his major two-volume work: *Language as a Means of Mental Culture and International Communication* (published in 1853).
- “The method of nature is the archetype of all methods, and especially of the method of learning languages” (1853/I: 216. In Howatt, 2004: 172)
- First author to overtly differentiate between modern receptive skills (“impression”) and productive ones (“expression”), which he labels as the four branches of language learning: reading, hearing, speaking and writing (Howatt, 2004: 171).

5. C. Marcel (1793-1896)

✓ Pedagogical principles:

- Reading should be taught before other skills.
- Combination of analytic and synthetic methods of instruction.

The analytical method brings the learner in immediate contact with the objects of study; it presents to him models of decomposition and imitation. The synthetic method disregards example and imitation; it turns the attention of the learner to principles and rules, in order to lead him, by an indirect course, to the objects of study.

(Marcel, 1883: 209. In Howatt, 2004: 172)



Wilkins' (1976) analytic and synthetic syllabuses (Unit 4.3.1)

5. C. Marcel (1793-1896)

- Marcel's advice to the teacher:

The instructor must frequently repeat the same expressions, and always accompany them with looks, tones, gestures, and actions which explain them. The language of action, thus used comfortably to the process of nature, is, as an explanatory means, preferable to translation, which would create confusion by the mixture of the two idioms.

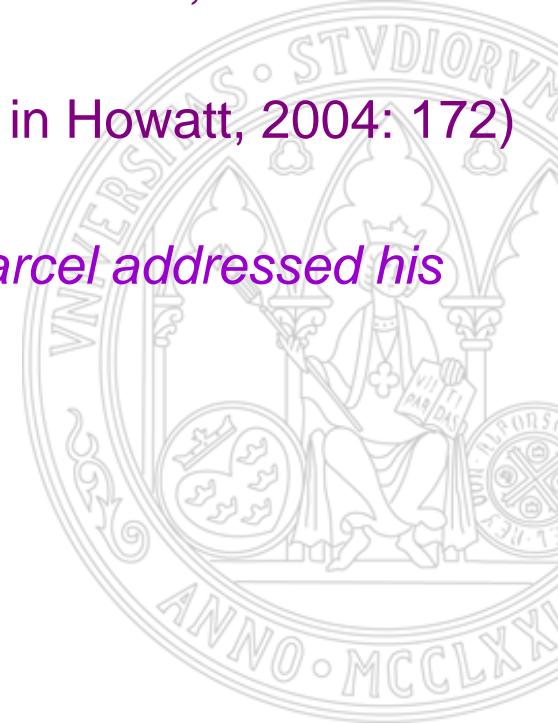
(Marcel 1853/l: 331) (Quoted in Howatt, 2004: 172)



What age group of learners do you think that Marcel addressed his method to?



The Direct Method (DM) (Unit 3.2.4.)



6. T. Prendergast (1806-1886)

- ✓ Method: “The Mastery System”.
- ✓ *The Mastery of Languages, or the Art of Speaking Foreign Languages Idiomatically* (1864). French, German, Spanish (1869), Latin and Hebrew adaptations
- ✓ One of the first authors to record the observation that children use contextual and situational cues to interpret utterances and that they use memorised phrases and “routines” in speaking via repetition.



In this sense he can be considered a forerunner of structurally based methods, together with the fact that he proposed the first “structural syllabus”, advocating that learners should be taught the most basic structural patterns occurring in the language (see Unit 4.1.2).

6. T. Prendergast (1806-1886)

- ✓ Prendergarst believed that students should learn the most frequent phrases in real communication which contain as many basic rules as possible. In this way, the mastery sentences were “deliberately ‘packed’ with linguistic information. This gives them an unfortunate air of unreality” (Howatt, 2004: 176). Examples:

Why did you not ask him to come, with two or three of his friends, to see my brother's gardens?

When was the man who brought this parcel for me yesterday evening calls again, give it back to him, and tell him that it is not what I ordered at the shop.

(Prendergast, 1864: 8-9)

- ✓ Prendergast advocated the need for simple, carefully selected vocabulary and a graded set of materials that would allow the learner to generate sentences from the induced patterns and vocabulary.

7. R. S. Rosenthal

- ✓ *Meisterschaft System* (1883).
- ✓ Authentic natural method, very intelligently conceived. Berlitz's method is much less coherent. But the Direct Method was to become the natural method *par excellence*.
- ✓ The real objective in language teaching should be to speak modern languages and speak with fluency and idiomatic expressions.
- ✓ Learning principles:
 - Subconscious capacity that allows the learning of languages by means of the ear, the tongue and memory (i.e., natural learning)
 - Intelligence only monitors since thinking in a language is not thinking about a language. Thus grammar learning does not contribute to language learning and thinking in the language.
 - Incubation period (similar to the child).

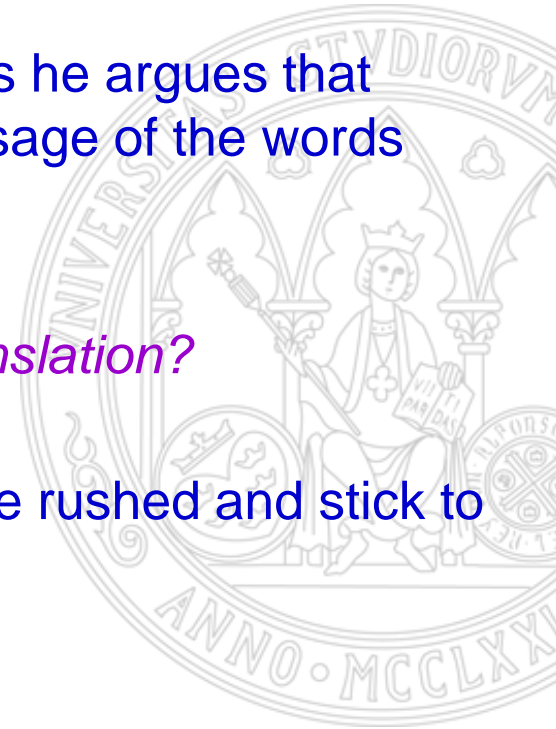
7. R. S. Rosenthal

- ✓ Pedagogical principles (Sánchez, 1997: 120):
 - Keys of teaching: learning certain structures and vocabulary that allow the multiple combinations of language.
 - The selection of vocabulary used in real life -main characteristic of *Meisterschaft System*.
 - Opposes his learning material to Gouin's series (as he argues that they are far away from the basic communicative usage of the words introduced).



Do you think that Rosenthal favours literal translation?

- Grammar is essential but its teaching should not be rushed and stick to adequate limits (following Erasmus)



8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

1) **GOAL:** To learn the language so as to be able to communicate in daily real life.

2) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- ✓ *L'art d'enseigner et d'étudier les langues* (1880). English translation in 1892.
- ✓ Great influence in Europe and North America.
- ✓ In his book Gouin tells about his useless attempts to learn German (memorising grammar rules, the whole dictionary...) and about the anecdote that came to underpin his own method: the visit of his three-year-old nephew to a corn mill in Normandy. The child enjoyed this visit very much and

Later, the boy reconstructed his visit with toys and other bits and pieces lying about the house, and simultaneously re-lived his experience by talking to himself. Naturally enough, since he had been watching an industrial process of grinding corn into flour, he organised his memories sequentially: First this happened, then that, then the next, etc.

(Howatt, 2004: 184)

- ✓ Gouin observed this event and suddenly came to the conclusion that he had found the key to learning foreign languages. "I wandered about repeating the words of the poet, 'I see, I hear, I know!'" (Gouin, 1892: 38).

8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

- ✓ In Gouin's words (1892: 90),

The most ordinary judgement knows how to discern that which goes before from that which comes after, knows how to distinguish the cause from the effect, the end from the means, the whole from the part. [...] Who says "method" says "order".

- ✓ Gouin's method would proceed as follows:

(1) The teacher explains in the native language the general content of the scene or topic. (2) He enacts the events, describing in the foreign language what he is doing. (3). The single acts are then divided, and again enacted. (4) All this is done first orally, then in writing.

(Titone, 1968: 34)

- ✓ The topics covered are five: the home, man in society, life in nature, science and occupations.

8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

- ✓ Gouin's preferred order of skills:

*Before everything else, it must be understood that the eye and the hand only take possession of the exercise **after** the ear has entirely conquered it for itself and transmitted it to the mind. Indeed, change the order, and begin by the writing, or even by the reading lesson, as is now everywhere done, and the lesson ceases to be fruitful.*

(Gouin, 1892: 133. Emphasis in the original)

- ✓ In this sense, then, the logic of Nature is in contradiction with that of the school, where learning is mostly performed through books. Instead of the eye, the ear is made to perceive sounds and words.



1, 2

8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

3) Analysis of the components of Gouin's Series Method

Axis 1. The Why. Underlying principles and beliefs (approach)

- ❑ Theory of language (nature of language, including approach to culture)
 - The unit of analysis is the sentence, not the word.
 - Series of sentences are interconnected: as a link between cause and effect and as belonging to a situation or context
 - The verb is the key element of the sentence.
 - Oral language comes first.
- ❑ Theory of learning (learning principles)
Inductive, natural learning.
- ❑ Theory of teaching (pedagogical principles)
 - Inductive approach to grammar and vocabulary
 - A period of incubation (exposure to language) before repetition aloud
 - Teaching is directed by the teacher and the school authority



8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

3) Analysis of the components of Gouin's Series Method

Axis 2. The What. Objectives of teaching. Syllabus specifications

- Model of language: Oral language from daily real-life. Descriptive type of language
- Emphasised language areas: Grammar, specifically the verb
- Emphasised skills: Listening and speaking

8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

3) Analysis of the components of Gouin's Series Method

Axis 3. The How. Activities through which the selected content is transmitted to the students and other procedural aspects

- Activities:
 - From 18 to 30 sentences in each series
 - Imitation and repetition of sentences interconnected by the relationship between cause and effect and sufficiently contextualised in a situation
 - Listening to teacher acting the series in the L1 and then in the L2
 - Use of gestures and miming
- Roles of teacher (including feedback issues). Traditional.
- Roles of students: passive.
- Roles of instructional materials: very difficult to devise a textbook following Gouin's principles.

8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

4) Critical assessment of Gouin's Series Method

□ Positive aspects (Titone, 1968: 36):

1. The new element provided by Gouin was the intense activity through dramatization of the sentences to be drilled. Language was no longer considered a construct of isolated pieces. Language is behaviour, Gouin could say today. Hence, his use of association, mimicry and memorisation.
2. He emphasised the need for concrete and familiar experiences
3. Use of complete sentences anchored in true-to-life situations instead of fragments of speech taken out of living context.

8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

4) Critical assessment of Gouin's Series Method

❑ Negative aspects:

1. Weak link between the sentences in his series and the daily life communicative reality. No one speaks as the following: *I stretch out my arm, I grab the knob, I turn the knob and thus I open the door.* (Sánchez, 1997: 130)
2. Fondness for logic distorts the normal and natural character of the linguistic production, which means that Gouin moves farther and farther from the natural method. (Sánchez, 1997: 130)
3. Exaggerated analysis of speech and behaviour into “micro-segments” (Titone, 1968: 36)
4. The excessive use of translation (especially in the early stages) (Titone, 1968: 36)
5. Opposition to phonetics, reading, and written exercises (Lado, 1988: 15)
6. Recommendation of a large vocabulary (together with idiomatic phrases, most usual sentences) not graded by difficulty or frequency, but driven by mere intuition (Titone, 1968: 36)

8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

4) Critical assessment of Gouin's series

❑ Negative aspects:

7. Distrusted *realia* and pictorial representation...



...unlike which other representative names of the natural methodology?

8. In all: Gouin's materials may facilitate sentence memorisation, but those sentences are difficult to be admitted as relevant for real communication needs.



8. F. Gouin (1831-1896)

4) Critical assessment of Gouin's Series Method

The Gouin series became a standard technique in direct method language teaching and most teachers have at one time or another done the door-routine if nothing else. As a self-contained method, however, it was too restricted to attract much enthusiasm, though it enjoyed a vogue for a time. Sweet summed it up quite well in a remark which was, for him, unexpectedly restrained, given that Gouin did not use phonetics: “the “series method” may in itself be a sound principle, but it is too limited in its application to form even the basis of a fully developed method”

(Howatt, 2004: 185)

□ Lasting influence



Gouin's emphasis on the need to present new teaching items in a context that makes their meaning clear, and the use of gestures and actions to convey the meanings of utterances, are practices that later became part of such approaches and methods as Situational Language Teaching and Total Physical Response.

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 8)

