**A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**AMERICAN VISION**

It is hoped that this brief and necessarily oversimplified speech for you as future language teachers to learn about the origins of your profession. Such knowledge will give you some historical perspective that will be healthy in evaluating the so-called “innovations or “new” methods that you are frequently exposed to.

The [English language teaching tradition](https://www.tefl.net/methods/) has been subject to tremendous change, especially throughout the twentieth century. Perhaps more than any other discipline, this tradition has been practiced, in various adaptations, in language classrooms all around the world for centuries.

In 16TH 17th AND 18th centuries, foreign language learning was associated with the learning of Latin and Greek, both supposed to promote their speakers’ intellectuality.

At the time, it was of vital importance to focus on grammatical rules, syntactic structures, along with rote memorization of vocabulary and translation of literary texts

Late in the nineteenth century, the Classical Method came to be known as the Grammar Translation Method, which offered very little beyond an insight into the grammatical rules attending the process of translating from the second to the native language.

It is widely recognized that the Grammar Translation Method is still one of the most popular and favorite models of language teaching but …..

The last two decades of the nineteenth century, a new age appeared

Gouin came up with a new idea based o his experience of learning German. After a long period of time he didn’t learn anything base on the structural way of learning.

Then he observed his 3 years old nephew who at that age living in France had managed to become a chatterbox of French – a fact that made him think that the child held the secret to learning a language. Thus, he came to the conclusion that language learning is a matter of transforming perceptions into conceptions and then using language to represent these conceptions. Equipped with this knowledge, he devised a teaching method premised upon these insights. It was against this background that the Series Method was created, which taught learners directly a “series” of connected sentences that are easy to understand.

Nevertheless, this approach to language learning was short-lived and, only a generation later, gave place to the Direct Method, posited by Charles Berlitz. The basic tenet of Berlitz’s method was that second language learning is similar to first language learning. In this light, there should be lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no translation, and little if any analysis of grammatical rules.

The outbreak of World War II heightened the need for Americans to become orally proficient in the languages of their allies and enemies alike. To this end, bits and pieces of the Direct Method were appropriated in order to form and support this new method, the “Army Method,” which came to be known in the 1950s as the Audiolingual Method.

The Audiolingual Method was based on linguistic and psychological theory and one of its main premises was conditioning and habit-formation models of learning created by behavioristic psychologists.

But its popularity diminished after 1964.  It didn’t promote the communicative ability as it paid attention to memorization and drilling, without taking into account the role of context and world knowledge in language learning. After all, it was discovered that language was not acquired through a process of habit formation and errors were not necessarily bad.

Chomskyan revolution in linguistics around 1970s drew the attention of linguists and language teachers to the “deep structure” of language, while psychologists took into account the affective and interpersonal nature of learning. As a result, the Humanistic approach appeared and based on it, new methods were proposed, all of them based on the importance of psychological factors in language learning.

David Nunan, another famous linguist referred to these methods as “designer” methods.

Two of these “designer” methods were:

Suggestopedia, created by Lozanov (1979) was based on the use of our brain power and inner capacities. It is based on powers of our brain in learning a language.

Another is the Silent Way rested on cognitive rather than affective arguments and was characterized by a problem-solving approach to learning. Gattegno (1972) held that it is in learners’ best interests to develop independence and autonomy and cooperate with each other in solving language problems.

The Silent Way came in for an onslaught of criticism. More specifically, it was considered very harsh, as the teacher was distant and, in general lines, the classroom environment was not conducive to learning.

The 1970s

saw an explosion in alternative methodologies as well, including Total Physical Response (Asher), Silent Way (Gattegno) and Community Language Learning (Curran).

## Strategies-based instruction

The work of O’Malley and Chamot (1990), and others before and after them, emphasized the importance of style awareness and strategy development in ensuring mastery of a foreign language

## Communicative Language Teaching

The need for communication has been relentless, leading to the emergence of the Communicative Language Teaching. Having defined and redefined the construct of communicative competence; having explored the vast array of functions of language that learners are supposed to be able to accomplish; and having probed the nature of styles and nonverbal communication, teachers and researchers are now better equipped to teach (about) communication through actual communication, not merely theorizing about it.