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SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES

The history of foreign language teaching has been and continues to be marked by controversy rather than by consensus about the best way, "the one true way" to teach a foreign language. Linguists and methodologists, traditionally grouped into two battalions -- the rationalists and the empiricists -- have been attempting to convince one another about the way foreign languages ought to be taught. Those who have become disillusioned by the failure of the absolutists have written 'eclecticism' on their flag. With this new "one true way" came a new kind of diversity within the foreign language teaching profession. Without having a common yardstick, however, against which the outcomes of the various language teaching strategies could be measured no consensus can be arrived at about the future directions of our profession (Omaggio 1983) and we are working with only a set of working hypotheses for ourselves as foreign language teachers (Strasheim 1976).

Instead of presuming to identify some "organizing principle" for language teaching which would have the potential to revolutionize foreign language education in some enduring way (Omaggio 1983), I will attempt to clarify the basic assumptions underlying some major foreign language teaching strategies.

Being aware of the diffuseness of the notion 'strategy' in the recent literature on various foreign language teaching methodologies, I do not venture to give a viable definition of it. Throughout this contribution, 'strategy' will be used as a cover term for both 'method' and 'approach', as something that largely determines the why, the what, and the how of foreign language instruction.

Methods of and approaches to foreign language teaching and learning have been constantly swayed by trends and developments in allied

disciplines, especially linguistics and psychology. Such influence is inevitable, since language instructiom must be based on a certain view of language and of language acquisition. In recent years, the trend towards an interdisciplinary approach -- and away from theoretical fragmentation -- has become evident in many spheres. Foreign language teaching methodology should encompass not only a study of the language and its acquisition, but also insights gleaned from various sources (Raz 1982).

Differences in strategies may be the result of (1) different theories of the nature of language, (2) different types of language descriptions, and (3) different ideas on language learning and language acquisition (cf. Mackey 1965).

During the Middle Ages grammar was associated with logic, assuming that grammar was dependent on logical analysis. Language was divided into writing, speaking and thinking, which resulted in a close association of the processes of thought and grammar. And as logic, i. e. the laws of thought appeared to be universal, it followed that grammar was universal, too; one grammar would do for all languages despite individual word variations. Ignoring the characteristic differences between languages, grammarians modelled their description of a language on that of Latin. The mediaeval concept of language had and has not even now ceased to have far-reaching consequences for foreign language teaching and learning. The <u>Grammar-Translation Method,</u> the outcome of the concept, can be typified by the following:

-- collections of semantically unrelated sentences dominated by formal grammar, whose main concern is the word and the sentence;

-- teh learning of grammar for grammar's sake (the knowledge of the rules being more important than their applications): the nemorizing of labels, definitions, rules, and paradigms; the use of jingles for memorizing rare exceptions to paradigms, prepositions, governments, etc.;

-- learning unstructured bilingual lists of words, which results in poor retention, confusion of words and ideas;

-- practising rules, paradigms and isolated vocabulary items through exercises in two-way translation;

-- two-way translation of texts of increasing difficulty (foreign texts are seen as a sort of unfolding confirmation of the grammar and its rules.);

-- the lack of oral work or teaching pronunciation (which is limited to a few introductory notes).

The ultimate goals of teaching a foreign language are (1) to enable the learner to translate literary works, (2) translation into the foreign language through the conscious application of rules of grammar, and (3) knowledge about the language.

The developments in allied disciplines laying the foundations of the Direct Method are (1) descriptive phonetics and (2) principles of psychology to the learning of languages: the association of ideas, visualization, and learning through the senses.

The main features of the Direct Method are as follows:

-- the primacy of speech; work on the spoken language which starts with the study of sounds through the aid of phonetic notation;

-- reading through roughly graded material written in a contemporary style; the presentation of all reading matter orally;

-- the use of written work in the form of reproduction exercises;

-- the exclusion of the mother tongue as a vehicle of instruction; the abolition of translation exercises, and talk about the foreign language;

-- stressing the importance of imitation, intuition, rote memory, associations and analogy in the learning process;

-- teaching grammar points inductively by means of examples and analogy, adopting techniques based on what happens when we learn the mother tongue, teaching grammar through the study of texts in the foreign language, through visual demonstration and by situation;

-- the use of many new items in the same lesson to encourage normal conversation;

-- presenting new items of vocabulary in the context of the reading passage;

-- the teaching of meaning by inference; the teaching of concrete things through objects, pictures and gestures, and abstract ones through definitons (i. e. through the association of ideas);

-- oral teaching of grammar and vocabulary;

-- extensive listening and imitation until forms become automatic;

-- the use of dialogues and dramatization.

By emphasizing the importance of spoken language and discarding the use of translation, the Direct Method was paving the way for the Audiolingual Method, which held sway in the 1950s and 1960s. The primacy of speech over writing was also promoted by the work of cultural anthropologists such as Sapir (1921), structural linguists such as Bloomfield (1933) as well as behaviourist psychologists such as Skinner (1957). The anthropologists' exploration of Indian languages involved spoken raw material and required a descriptive method of handling an unfamiliar language. This is the origin of American structuralism, which considers language as a self-contained system of interrelated parts. Units of meaning are discovered on the basis of formal patterning rather than the explicit use of notional or semantic criteria. The theory of learning underlying the Audiolingual Method is behaviourist; this views language acquisition as a process of habit formation and conditioned responses to external stimuli.

The Audiolingual Method places emphasis on the ceraful selection and strict grading of structures, oral practice and repetition. The order of presentation of the language skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Grammatical structures are embedded in short dialogues which are to be learned by heart; vocabulary is kept to a minimum. The presentation of the dialogue is followed by choral, then individual drilling. Meaning is viewed as secondary in importance compared to formal competence. Pattern drills and substitution tables are often mechanical, although they may also be followed by an analysis of grammatical points built on the learner's knowledge of principal rules of grammar. This gives the learner the intellectual knowhow to comprehend the given patterns and discourages meaningless memorization. Special emphasis being laid on the production of correct sentences, error is to be avoided at all costs as encouraging the formation of bad habits. It is also assumed that the majority of errors are due to the fact that languages are structurally different and the habits of the mother tongue acquisition interfere with

the learning of new linguistic habits. Contrastive linguistic analysis is therefore of great importance in the selection and grading of stuctures for teaching purposes. Linguistic competence being the focus of interest, little systematic attention is paid to the way stuctures can be applied to communicative situations in the expectation that communication will naturally follow. With this approach the learner is able to produce correct sentences, but in real situations the true test of communication too often eludes him.

In spite of Noam Chomsky's scepticism concerning the direct relevance of linguistic and psychological theories to language teaching ("I am, frankly, rather skeptical about the significance, for the teaching of languages, of such insights and understanding as has been attained in linguistics and psychology" 1966: 43), his work gave added impetus to the 'cognitive' reaction to 'behaviourist' theories of learning, which is due to the emphasis placed on the creative aspect of language use and the intrinsic organizing capacity of the mind. The fact that, according to Chomsky we produce and comprehend new sentences on the basis of a limited number of grammatical rules has given consciuos learning a new respectability, and has helped shift the emphasis from teacher-centred to learner-centred strategies where problem-solving activities are of prime importance. With communicative approaches the stress has shifted from accuracy to fluency. Cognitive code learning claims that language learning is the acquisition of rules, that individuals learn in different ways and that errors are an inevitable and useful aspect of learning, informing the teacher about the learning strategies adopted by the learner at various stages, and giving a sign of the learner's attempt to communicate independently.

In sum, in more recent strategies to be discussed below, the learner has become the centre of interest, linguistic competence and accuracy have given way to communicative competence and fluency, and errors, presupposed by natural communication, creativity and fluency, receive appropriate treatment. "The latest prodigy of the language teaching world", one of the most powerful influences on foreign language teaching methodology has been the Communicative Approach, "a cover term for all those approaches which have as their primary emphasis the development of

the student's communicative competence. Thus situational and notional-functional approaches would be included; structural syllabuses and grammar-translation methods automatically excluded" (Murray 1984: 135). Although theorists had begun to offer the language teaching profession the notion 'communicative competence' based on linguistic and sociolinguistic insights, methodologists were tardy in formulating the new strategy. The eventual shift in focus from the teaching of linguistic competence to communicative competence was facilitated by Wilkins' (1976) notional-functional syllabus and Munby's work (1978) dealing with the learner-centred aspect of the Communicative Approach (Murry 1984).

In one of the major publications of the Council of Europe Modern Language Project (1980), we are provided with the outline of the necessary components of a communicative syllabus in, which there is primary concern for:

1. the learning objectives defined in terms of behaviour (The aim of learning is always to enable the learner to do something which he could not do at the beginning of the learning process.);

2. the situations specified in terms of roles, settings, and topics (the situations in which the learner will need the foreign language);

3. the socially and psychologically defined roles a language-user will have to play;

4. the settings in which the learner will have to play the roles;

5. the topics the learner will have to deal with;

6. the language activities in which the learner will participate;

7. the language functions the learner will have to fulfil;

8. the general and specific (topic-related) notions which the learner will have to be able to handle (The learner will need the ability to refer to entities - things, people, ideas, states, actions, events, etc. - , to properties and qualities of entities, and to relations between entities. The notions are largely determined by the topics, though notions of properties and qualities, and those of relations, are used more generally.);

9. the language forms (words, phrases, and structures) the learner will have to be able to use in order to do all that has been

specified;

10. <u>the degres of skill</u> with which the learner will have to be able to perform) in other words, how well he will have to be able to do all that has been specified).

As Murray (1984: 136-137) points out the results of the Communicative Approach have not been as promising as expected, the Communicative Approach is not without its problems. It is only different from former foreign language teaching strategies in that it replaces in inventory of structures by a descriptive taxonomy of idealized language functions. It is based on the faulty assumption "that whatever is presented to the learner must be broken into a linguist's descriptive categories and subsequently will be learnt in the order in which it is presented". This mechanistic view of the language learning process and the static view of communicative competence disregards "the naturalness, the spontaneity, the dynamism and the creativity we know to be involved in everyday language behaviour" as well as "the generative capacity that is the defining characteristic of language (Chomsky 1965)".

The effects on second language acquisition research of the Chomskyan revolution in linguistics have also created a vacuum as regards theory. The inadequate behaviourist model of acquisition has been put aside, but no new model of language acquisition has been presented, which may be attributable to the growing rift between transformational-generative grammar in particular and theoretical linguistics in general. This, if true, is regrettable, "since a theory of language acquisition without a linguistic theory is doomed to inconsequentiality". The most important discovery in recent years to fill in the vacuum is probably Stephen Krashen's coherent theory of second language acquisition. Krashen (1981, 1982a) submits five main hypotheses:

1. the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis,
2. the Input Hypothesis,
3. the Monitor Hypothesis,
4. the Affective Filter Hypothesis, and
5. the Natural Order Hypothesis (Gregg 1984: 79).

The <u>acquisition-learning</u> distinction is based on the assumption that

for rule internalization two distinct types of cognitive structures can be postulated: "1/ those mechanisms that guide 'automatic' language performance ..: that is, performance ... where speed and spontaneity are crucial and the learner has no time to consciously apply linguistic mechanisms ... and (2) those mechanisms that guide puzzle- or problem-solving performance..." (Lawler-Selinker 1971: 35).·

A similar distinction can be made between informal and formal learning. The former replicates the acquisition of the mother tongue by the child. This approach emphasizes the importance of fluency, understanding, conveying and acting on messages. The latter focuses on vocabulary items, grammatical structures and lays special emphasis on accuracy (White 1984).

Krashen's Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis states "that adults have two independent systems for developing ability in second languages, subconscious language acquisition and conscious language learning, and that these systems are interrelated in definite way: subconscious acquisition appears to be far more important... Language acquisition is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language -- natural communication -- in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding. Error correction and explicit teaching of rules are not relevant to language acquisition..." (Krashen 1981: 1). Also, conversation, 'practising speaking' does not directly aid foreign language acquisition. It may be beneficial, however, indirectly, because the student involved in a conversation is likely to get comprehensible input.

Krashen's hypothesis has given rise to much controversy. He points out that conscious learning need not precede subconscious acquisition, but he does not show that it cannot, that the acquisition of a foreign language cannot be facilitated by presentation of rules and explanations. Maintaining that learning does not become acquisition is undermining the principal foundation of the cognitive code theory, whose main plank is that explicit knowledge through plentiful practice will get internalized

into implicit knowledge.

Unfortunately, Krashen fails to define the terms 'conscious' and 'subconscious' (McLaughlin 1978). Does 'conscious' entail 'incapable of becoming unconscious'? Does 'subconscious' mean 'not accessible to the conscious' or 'not conscious at a given moment'? "If by definition the 'subconscious' is inaccessible, and conscious 'learning' is always accessible, then Krashen's claim that 'learning' does not become 'acquisition' is of course trivially true, but uninteresting. On the other hand, if (some) unconscious knowledge is capable of being brought to consciousness, and if conscious knowledge is capable of becoming unconscious... then there is no reason whatever to accept Krashen's claim, in absence of evidence" (Gregg 1984).

Let us now go on to Krashen's Input Hypothesis. He says that the Input Hypothesis may be the single most important concept in language acquisition. His claim is dramatic: it is that those who receive comprehensible input acquire language, whereas conscious learning does not help acquisition. Although it may help the learner to monitor his output, it is, essentially, a luxury (Hamer 1983). "The major function of the second language classroom is to provide intake for acquisition. This being a very difficult task, one could also say that the major challange facing the field of applied linguistics is to create materials and contexts that provide intake" (Krashen 1981: 101). Some further requirements need to be added: (1) successful acquisition requires large quantities of comprehensible input (it seems to take about two hours per day for one year -- about 700 hours -- to reach medium levels of proficiency); (2) the input needs to be so interesting and relevant that the acquirer actually forgets he is listening or reading in a foreign language and is totally focussed on the meaning (He does not acquire by first learning the rules and then trying to use them: he acquires by focussing on meaning. He is aided in comprehension by his knowledge of the world, by the context, as well as his knowledge of the language.); (3) the input needs to get progressively more complex (The input needs to be a roughly-tuned, i. e. language adapted to a level at which the acquirer can understand what he hears or reads even though he may not know all the items of language included.)

In short, the input does not have to be grammatically sequenced; it just has to be understood. If it is comprehensible, and if there is enough of it, and if it is varied, it will contain everything the acquirer needs (Krashen 1982b).

The fundamental claim of the Monitor Hypothesis is that conscious learning is available to the language performer only as a Monitor ... and makes only a small contribution to communicative ability, there being several constraints on the use of the Monitor: (1) the performer must have sufficient time, (2) he or she needs to know the rule. Conscious learning is therefore very difficult to apply to performance successfully (Krashen 1981).

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis also helps to interpret the terms language aptitude and attitude. It has been stated that both aptitude and attitude (i. e. affective variables) are related to foreign language achievement, but are not related to each other. Language aptitude is directly related to conscious learning, while attitude is more closely linked to unconscious acquisition. According to Savignon (1976), "attitude is the single most important factor in second language learning".

Language aptitude can be defined in terms of (1) phonetic coding ability (i. e. the ability to store new sequences of sounds in memory), (2) grammatical sensitivity, and (3) inductive ability. (Through this third factor, foreign language aptitude is probably closely related to general intelligence.) (Carroll 1973)

Attitudinal factors can either encourage intake or enable the student to utilize input for acquisition. The Affective Filter Hypothesis, originally proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977) says that the student must not only understand the input, but he must also be 'open' to it. Many people are thought to have an 'affective filter', a mental block that prevents them from achieving competence in a foreign language. When the filter is 'up', comprehensible as the input may be, it does not reach those areas of the brain which are responsible for acquisition.

The following attitudinal factors are said to contribute to a low affective filter: (1) integrative motivation /the desire to be like valued members of the community; (2) instumental motivation /the desire

to master a language for practical reasons); (3) personality factors - interrelated with motivational factors - such as self-confidence (lack of anxiety, self-esteem, outgoing pershoes), attitude toward the classroom and the teacher, and an analytic orientation, which is relatable to conscious learning.

The Natural Order Hypothesis claims that "Second language acquirers acquire (not learn) grammatical structures in a predictable order" (Krashen 1980: 169), which seems to be supported by a series of morpheme studies. Krashen, however, does not make himself very clear on what 'structure' is and makes no principled distinction between comparable and non-comparable 'structures'. He has no linguistic theory to relate to the data from the morpheme studies. In the absence of such a theory, there is no reason to assume that, say, third person -s and progressive -ing are comparable, let alone (r) and negation. Krashen seems to recognize that "a strictly linear view of the natural order hypothesis, that there is only one stream of progress that acquirers follow in strict sequence" is incorrect. Rather, "several streams of development are taking place at the same time" (1982a: 53-54). "One definite consequence of allowing more than one 'natural order', however, is to vitiate the Natural Order Hypothesis" (Gregg 1984: 85).

The fact that no one knows what the 'natural order' is and that Krashen himself seems to be in the dark about it has not kept him and Tracy D. Terrell (1983) from trying to adopt a strategy based on the Natural Order Hypothesis. Terrell's Natural Approach to foreign language teaching can be typified by:
-- extensive listening activities,
-- delayed speech,
-- massive vocabulary acquisition in early stages, and
-- minimal error correction.

Well-founded as many of the criticisms of Krashen's hypotheses may be, I must admit that there is much truth in what Earl Stevick, one of his reviewers said, "potentially the most fruitful concept for language teachers that has come out of the linguistic sciences during my professional lifetime...". Krashen's theory really provides new insight into all areas of second language research and practice, challenging us

to verify our approaches to foreign language taching. The use of techniques sush as James J. Asher's Total Physical Response (Asher 1966, 1969, 1977), which is fairly consistent with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, may provide useful amounts of intake in the classroom. In Asher's approach, the teaching material consists of series of actions in the imperative. The idea of such series was originated by Francois Gouin (1880) more than a century ago. Subsequently, in the 1920s, it was Harold E. Palmer (1925), who introduced action series into the foreign language classroom. Unfortunately, they eventually fell into disuse. It is to Asher that we owe thanks for the rediscovery of action series in the 1960s.

The key ideas in Total Physical Response are the following:

1. Listening comprehension should be developed in advance of speaking. (According to Krashen (1981: 107) Total Physical Response "does indeed work: foreign language students, after 32 hours of TPR, had significantly better listening comprehension scores than students in 'ordinary' classes after 160 hours, and scores on other tests were about the same.

2. Listening comprehension should be developed through movements of the student's body. Students are required to respond to teacher commands psysically and to give commands to evoke physical response by other students (or even the teacher).

3. Students may remain silent in early stages, they should not be forced to speak. After internalizing some portion of the foreign language, they will spontaneously begin to talk, which usually happens after ten hours of comprehensible input.

A condensed description of the basic procedures of Total Physical Response follows (cf. Seely 1981):

1. Setting up the situation, with props, before the students' eyes.
   While setting up the situation, students are asked to name objects.

2. Initial demonstration of series. The teacher dramatically reads the series aloud while someone responds physically and emotionally to his reading. Pantomime may also be used by the performer. The demostration may be repeated once or twice.

3. <u>Group live action.</u> The teacher tells the whole class/group to do each of the actions in the series.

   (The first three procedures may be repeated several times.)

4. <u>Written copy.</u> This is the first time the students can see the series in writing.

5. <u>Oral repetition.</u> Plenty of time may be devoted to pronunciation. At this point meaning can also be clarified.

6. <u>Students giving commands - teacher and other students responding physically.</u>

7. <u>Students all working in pairs.</u> The teacher goes round listening, encouraging, approving, and helping.

And now let us look at a sample of the series:

ICE CREAM AND T.V.

1. Go to the refrigerator.

2. Open the freezer.

3. Get the ice cream out.

4. Close the freezer and the refrigerator.

5. Put some ice cream in a bowl.

6. Leave the carton on the counter.

7. Go into the other room.

8. Turn on the T.V.

9. Sit down and watch your favourite programme.

10. Eat your ice cream.

11. When you're finished, go back for more.

12. Oh no! The ice cream's melted! You forgot to put it away! What a mess!

The Direct Method opposed to the Grammar-Translation Method, the Communicative Approach opposing the Audiolingual Method, Krashen's hypotheses denying the importance of conscious learning are all extremes, which take root in a negation of the other extreme, and result in a new state of imbalance between the different but coherent sides of human

beings. Only a new perception of the individual can be expected to create the equilibrium.

Many of the foreign language teaching strategies that have recently surfaced are based on a new image of the individual popularized in the 1960s in the field of education by humanistic psychology (Maslow 1966, 1968), opposing both behaviourism and Freudianism as well as cognitivism. Both behaviourism and Freudian psychology reflect a view of the individual as an essentially passive and reactive being, whose emotions, desires and individual experiences are irrelevant, who lives in an environment from which he is, in some way, estranged; cognitive theories of learning emphasize the mind's innate capacity to understand and organize experience meaningfully, sacrificing the affective realm of the indivudual; humanistic psychologists, however, call for education of the total individual. Humanistic psychology focuses on such distinctively human qualities as self-awareness, self-actualization, creativity, valuation, choice, responsibility; it views an individual as unique, self-motivating, voluntry, and active rather than reactive; as a creature and creator of a dynamic interaction with others and the world; as an indivisible entity, a whole person whose body, mind and emotions are in harmony (Yoshikawa 1982).

In Suggestopedia, the individual is seen as a whole person. In this approach, cognitive, conscious learning is as important as affective, unconscious aquisition. When the individual has brain balance, i. e. when the two halves of his brain, the logical left side and the intuitive, creative right side are brought into harmony, there is a considerable increase in the effectiveness of learning. "The basic premise embodied in this approach is that each individual is potentially a whole being, but ordinarily the individual views him/herself as less than that, mainly due to individual and cultural differences that reinforce different realms of the human brain. Each individual is capable of restoring individual wholeness through such techniques as breathing and listening to alpha brain wave-inducing music." (Yoshikawa 1982: 393-394)

Although there has been considerable controversy over Suggestopedia, numerous are also its advocates in many countries of the world.

Now let us look briefly at the introduction of one of the textbooks

(Gateva 1978) consistent with the latest requirements of the suggestopedic system. This is what Professor Lozanov (with whom I had the luck to discuss some of the issues of Suggestipedia in Sofia in 1983) finds important to say in the introduction to the textbook of the Italian language.

The material is drawn from life on a communicative level. Following the plot of the light didactic story, the students become familiar with various aspects of the characters' psychology, with the characteristic features of Italy and its ancient and modern culture; they penetrate into the beauty of the foreign language. In this way difficulties of mastering the language recede into the background and are overcome imperceptibly.

The textbook is consistent with the basis of suggestology, as well as with the principles and techniques of suggestopedia. Its correct use makes it possible for the teacher to help students to realize the reserve complex, i. e. to learn the material with considerable ease at a creative level and without unpleasant fatigue, with no harmful effects on the nervous-system, with favourable educational effects and with ever-growing motivation.

Besides giving the whole plot of the didactic play, the textbook has the following new points, advantages from the standpoint of Suggestopedia:

1. Most of the subject-matter (850 new words and considerable part of the essential grammar) is presented already in the first lesson. So use is made of the particular suggestive features at the first meeting, when learning is the easiest. At the same time, the students have a wide choice of words, phrases, models and grammatical forms in all the classes for the elaboration of the new material. They do not feel "conditioned" and restricted within the framework of a few words and models when expressing their thoughts in the foreign language. In the following lessons, the number of new words and grammar units decreases, so that learning them is easier.

2. The different parts of the sentences, as well as the word groups, have been put in separate lines so that can be changed. In this way, hundreds of (parts of) patterns of the spoken language that can be changed are learnt more easily. Without falling into struturalism, patterns are used

imperceptibly, naturally, and usefully.

3. The visual aids in the textbook are connected with the subject-matter and globalized. In this way, audio-visualization is carried out at a semantic and double-plane level, with great liberty for creative initiative, avoiding conditioning within the narrow framework of a small number of visualized elements.

4. The music and the words of the songs are consistent with suggestive requirements for the emotional 'introduction' of important semantic, phonetic and grammatical units.

5. Students are given translations of every lesson in the textbook in order to grasp the starting vocabulary better and in order to satisfy the needs of the students' cognitive process in the initial two phases of the suggestopedic process of learning: deciphering and active concert session. On the second day, the translations are taken away from the students. This is in line with the requirements for learning the foreign language and for rapid transition to thinking in the foreign language.

6. The textbook can serve as a model methodical handbook for compiling other similar ones for the suggestopedic system of teaching and learning foreign languages.

7. The text-book is for working with a teacher, who has been trained in the suggestopedic system. During the second half of the course, students are already trained to study independently as well. (Detailed instructions for the way teachers and students should work with the textbook are to be found in the methodical handbook for the whole suggestopedic teaching-education-remedial system, e. g. Lozanov-Gateva 1981).

The textbook, the didactic story, is divided into eight parts:

1. Making an Acquaintance aboard the Plane,

2. Waking up,

3. The Eternal City,

4. The Seasons,

5. The Months,

6. At the Concert,

7. Friendship,

8. Good Bye, Rome.

It contains some 2500 lexical items and the essential grammar of the Italian language. The whole material is supposed to be acquired in 4 study periods per day for a month (24 days), by the help of a good teacher, who has high qualification in the subject, who is honest towards the method, who is a clever, flexible, and artistic personality.

I conclude my contribution by saying that my purpose has only been to provide a brief review of some fresh perspectives on the language teaching profession for those not familiar with most current approaches to foreign language teaching and learning. Although I subscribe to no specific one of the recently formulated assumptions, my sympathies are with an image of the individual as synthetic and holistic in nature; and I wish to suggest that some of our research efforts ought to be in this direction. Acknowledging that there are caveats to be borne in mind when adopting a strategy based on a view of the new beliefs, I am fully convinced that many things that go on in the classroom are badly in need of improvement.

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