An Exploration Of Humanistic Methodologies Of Language Teaching: The Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, Psychodrama

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore four unconventional methods of teaching languages: the Silent Way, Community Language Learning (CLL), Suggestopedia, Psychodrama or to give it its French name, 'Psychodramaturgie Linguistique.' They are often indiscriminately lumped together as 'fringe methodologies' and conveniently dismissed as 'gimmicky', 'fads', 'crazes', their practitioners being referred to as being on the 'lunatic fringe' They are, in fact, quite different from each other, both in conception and in realisation.

My interest in these methodologies came about as a result of a British Council Course I attended in Canterbury, England, in 1983 In the course of two weeks, I was taught Greek by the Silent Way, German by CLL, Russian by Suggestopedia, and French by Psychodrama. The impressions gained stem from the necessarily limited viewpoint of the participant-observer, who tries to be a willing learner in demonstration lessons and, at the same time, an open-minded critic of the methods as a whole.

I will first begin by identifying the basic features of the 'humanistic' movement with which these methodologies are associated. Then the theory behind each methodology and the implementation of it in the classroom will be outlined, followed by a discussion of how theory and practice relate to each other and to humanistic language teaching as a whole. Finally, the differences between these methodologies in their interpretation of humanistic principles will be outlined.

Humanistic Language Teaching

Most of the approaches which have been popular in recent years, and given the label 'humanistic', have certain features in common. The following are the most important characteristics:

(i) They involve the whole person of the learner

It is assumed that learning will be effective and meaningful when it involves the total personality of the learner, both intellectually and emotionally This leads to an emphasis on the affective side of learning.

(ii) They see second language learning as quite different from learning a first language.

Following Krashen (1982) a distinction is drawn between 'learning' and 'acquisition' 'Acquisition' is a process similar, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their first language and is a sub-conscious or unconscious process. 'Learning' refers to conscious knowledge of a second language, know-

ing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them is 'knowing about' language. Both processes co-exist in the adult whereas in children only acquisition is found. In adults, acquisition 'initiates' utterances in a second language and is responsible for fluency. Learning has only one function, and that is as 'monitor'. The 'monitor' checks the output of the acquired system and performs self-correction. Acquisition is regarded as central and learning, more peripheral. The goal of teaching, therefore, is to encourage acquisition by replicating the conditions under which it takes place for example, totally communicative situations, anxiety-free, non-corrective, etc.

(iii)   They assume that learning will be more effective if the learning environment is secure.

Any threat in the learning situation is likely to cause the learner to defend himself, thus slowing down the rate of learning. Therefore, there is emphasis on reducing the anxiety and tension of language learning.

(iv)   They encourage a communicative situation from the beginning.

The emphasis is on fluency and use of the target language almost from the start i.e., 'learning by doing'

(v)   They are explicitly concerned with what learners themselves bring to the learning process.

Students are regarded as people who can contribute to their own learning rather than passive recipients of someone else's teaching.

(vi)   They emphasize the centrality of the learner in the learning process, i.e., it is 'learner-centred'

Attention is given to the purposes for which the learner needs the foreign language, what they are interested in, their needs — linguistic as well as emotional, expectations and hopes

(vii)   They are concerned about the distribution of power in the classroom.

The degree of independence, autonomy, responsibility and creativity which are allowed or required of the learner are key issues in humanistic language teaching.

(viii)   They try to create a community feeling of all 'pooling together'

Humanistic language teaching emphasizes learning in pairs and groups with pupils pooling their resources, helping and supporting each other

The Silent Way

Of the four methodologies, the Silent Way is probably the best known and has been around the longest, it still continues to strike many people as a bizarre way of learning and teaching. The Silent Way originated in the United States during the early 60's and is the creation of Dr. Caleb Gattegno. The principles of the approach are discussed in the first chapter of Gattegno's book, *Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools. The Silent Way* (2nd ed. 1972) The five that seems to me most important are the following:

(i)   Teaching should be subordinated to learning.

Learning, for Gattegno, is not so much an accumulation of facts as it is the learner's coming to use himself and his powers better. The question the teacher should ask is not so much, 'How can I teach?' rather it is 'How can I help my students to learn?' The teacher's responsibility is to translate the

learning task into a series of challenges She selects and times each challenge in accordance with her knowledge of the language and her perception of where the learner is at any given moment in the learning process.

    (ii)   Learning is not primarily imitation of practice.

Thus, a key tenet of audiolingualists is rejected by Gattegno. He sees the mind as an active agent which responds dynamically to new inputs by a process of assembling, examining, sorting, recasting and assimilating. This process ends in the formation of new images or the reshaping of old ones. Gattegno believes that much of this work goes on during sleep.

    (iii)   In learning, the mind 'equips itself by its own working, trial and error, deliberate experimentation, by suspending judgement and revising conclusions' (Gattegno 1972:4)

The mind is thus capable of constructing and refining its own 'inner criteria' A new 'inner' criterion is developed each time the learner comes to feel that he knows something from within himself, and not from echoing the teacher or memorising rules. The student must learn to notice these criteria and trust them. For this reason, the Silent Way seldom confirms a correct response on the part of the learner. By not overtly approving a correct response, the teacher leaves the student to take note of it, and to learn to trust himself more.

    (iv)   In language learning, the mind draws on everything it has already acquired, particularly including its experience of learning its native language.

Gattegno emphasizes that full use should be made of the skills already acquired by the learner in learning his mother-tongue. The Silent Way, therefore, attempts to harness again the original dynamics of trial, error and self-correction to give the learner vital clues and keys to the foreign language, building on this base gives the learner the confidence of approaching the foreign language as the variant on a challenge already mastered.

    (v)   If the teacher's activity is to be subordinated to that of the learner, then the teacher must not interfere with and sidetrack that activity

Here is the principal reason for the silence which gives the method its name. In teaching which is subordinated to learning, the teacher has to monitor the learning of the students to find out which stage they are at, or order to plan her next step. She cannot monitor and speak at the same time. The teacher should allow the learners to show her where the gap in their knowledge is. She should just say enough so that the 'spark' can jump across the gap.

Procedure

Anyone who has heard of the Silent Way at all knows that it makes use of a set of rods These rods come in ten different lengths (1-10 cms) but with identical cross-section (1 square cm), each length having its own distinctive colour. In addition, there are word charts, phonic charts called 'Fidels' in which phonemic distinctions appear as contrasting colours as well as drawings, worksheets and several books.

With regards to the linguistic units themselves, the basic strategy of the Silent Way is similar to that of traditional methods. It concentrates first on the acquisition, within a small vocabulary, of control over pronunciation and the structural elements.

In the first phase, the teacher begins by pointing at symbols on a phonic chart, the Fidel. These symbols stand for syllables of the spoken language. The symbols are printed in different colours, in such a way that symbols which are to be pronounced alike are coloured alike. The students read the syllables aloud, first in chorus and then individually This activity usually begins with a chart in the students' native language, or in a language in which they are literate. The students thus use their knowledge of familiar shapes to learn the phonetic meanings of the colours. Then, switching to the Fidel of the target language, and guided by the teacher's gestures, they use their knowledge of the pronunciations of the colours to read the syllables aloud from it. Where the new language contains sounds that are absent in the familiar language, the teacher silently focuses the students' attention and then gives them a single clear audible example of the sound. Otherwise, the teacher may, up to this point, have remained completely silent. During this first phase, the teacher shapes the students' pronunciation of the target language by means of her silent reaction to their efforts.

After the teacher is satisfied with the students' pronunciation of the sounds of the target language, she moves on to the next phase. Work in the second phase centres round a second set of charts, word charts. The words on the charts have been carefully selected from among the most common words of the language, including the words for numerals. Using these words, together with written numerals, the teacher leads the students to produce long numbers up to a million and beyond.

In the third phase, the teacher puts into use the set of coloured rods. Using the charts, together with gestures and perhaps a few spoken words, the teacher leads the students to talk about various configurations and uses of the rods. At first, work is on numbers and colours, but soon it moves into relative locations, and beyond that to virtually any grammatical structure that the teacher thinks the students need.

There are other materials used later in the course. I shall not describe them here because my purpose is only to show examples of how the basic principles of the Silent Way are realised in practice. The later materials and techniques embody the same principles as those in the three phases I have described. People who are interested in a complete treatment should read Gattegno's book, *The Common Sense of Teaching Foreign Languages* (1976).

Comments

The most striking feature of the Silent Way in undoubtedly the silences of the teacher The silences which occur in the lessons first of all provide students with a chance to process thoroughly in their minds the few things they have been given by the teacher A. Stevick in his book *Memory, Meaning & Method* (1976:139) cites evidence from research on short-term memory to support his observation that the silence which follows the Silent Way teacher's presentation of a new sound or word is a very efficient use of short-term memory New auditory material is retained for about 20 seconds in short-term memory before it is processed and assimilated. However, if new auditory material is introduced into short-term memory before the first material has faded from it, the later material will interfere with the person's ability to process and

assimilate the earlier Silence, on the other had, gives the mind maximum op-
portunity to extract information from a short bit of aural input. As Stevick
points out, in most methods 'the barrage of utterances from teacher and fellow
students is like a handful of stones thrown onto the surface of a quiet pond:
we are unable to follow the ripples from any one of them because of in-
terference produced by the others' The value of silence in aiding the teacher
to monitor the students' learning has already been noted. Another effect of
the silences of the teacher is to encourage inter-dependence between the
learners. The students frequently learn by overhearing one another. The op-
portunity given to students of learning from listening to each other, rather
than listening only to the teacher, is meant to bring home the point that they
are not absolutely dependent on a single authoritative voice and that their
collective memory and resources are just as reliable. Thus the use of silence,
as outlined above, is the practical realisation of the principle of subordinating
teaching to learning.

The other notable feature of the Silent Way Method is the matter of fact
manner of the teacher towards errors as well as successful efforts of learners.
The absence of comment by the teacher when students respond correctly is
intended to increase their self-reliance, to encourage them to take note of and
trust their 'inner criteria' There is no overt signalling of approval as in the
comment 'very good' or the enthusiastic nodding of the head which charact-
terised conventional teaching methods. On the other hand, if the stu-
dent's response is wrong, the teacher merely indicates silently through gestures
where additional work is to be done.

In other ways, however, the Silent Way does not quite square with
humanistic learning theory The Silent Way teacher operates by meticulously
breaking down the target language into easily assimilable units. Only one pro-
blem is dealt with at a time. Therefore, pronunciation is taken up before mean-
ingful expressions. New lexical and structural material is carefully broken down
into its elements, with one element being presented at a time. This system of
teaching gives an impression of efficiency. But as one critic points out, the
insistence that students should concentrate on only one thing at a time could
be regarded as tackling the complex issue of learning on too narrow a front.
Newmark (1981·161) too has pointed out the 'fallacy' of sequential and ac-
cumulative learning. He says,

> If the task of learning to speak English were additive and linear   it is dif-
> ficult to see how anyone could learn English. If each phonological and syntac-
> tic rule, each complex of lexical features   had to be acquired one at a time
>   . the child learner would be old before he could say a single appropriate thing
> and the adult learner would be dead.

'Awareness' is as much a watchword of the Silent Way as it is of most ap-
proaches that go by the name 'humanistic'. 'The teacher has two functions
with respect to his students. he must force awareness, he must provide exer-
cises to ensure facility' (Gattegno, 1976:14). However, in the case of the Silent
Way this awareness appears to be limited to the awareness of the way the
foreign language operates and the awareness of the students of the way they
are learning. In other humanistic approaches, making students aware is seen
as developing learners' awareness of their own potentialities, their bodies, their

interlocutors and the way they react to their utterances. The Silent Way's restriction of the range of types of awareness underlies the emphasis it attaches to the mechanics of the language and the low priority it appears to give to such areas as the interaction of speakers and the choice of language appropriate to who the speaker is and the occasion on which it is being used — central considerations in developing communicative competence.

Another way in which the Silent Way does not quite fit into the general humanistic framework is in the relationship between learner and subject matter Teaching content is not ascertained as a result of analysing the language needs of a particular group of learners, nor their interests. The subject matter is already fixed. It has been arrived at on the basis of an analysis of the foreign language and represents, according to Gattegno, key elements of the language which will introduce the learner to the spirit of the language. Students must be prepared to accept that an expert has refined the language into a form which is good for them to learn. They are required to generate scores of sentences at the instruction of the teacher, using only the words on the chart. It is doubtful that such artificial sentences have much relevance for the learners since the content of the charts cannot possibly reflect what students actually want to say or hear It would appear, therefore, that the content of what learners practise is not given high priority in the Silent Way In most of the recent approaches, humanistic or otherwise, the aims, interests and specific needs of learners are of central concern in planning courses.

Humanistic teaching tends to advocate learner independence. Gattegno states that 'independence' is one essential quality of education, the others are 'autonomy' and 'responsibility' Again, a key concept like 'independence' needs to be examined in terms of what actually happens in the classroom. Community language learning, as we shall see, allows the learners complete freedom to determine the content of their course. The Silent Way, on the other hand, demonstrates a more restricted interpretation of 'independence'. In no sense are Silent Way learners allowed to be so independent of the teacher as to influence the subject matter of the course nor do they have independence to initiate classroom interactions since they must obey the teacher's instructions. Independence, for Silent Way learners, seems to consist of gaining a feeling of control over the target language. On the relationship between teacher, learner and subject matter Stevick (1980:7) writes, 'Humanism emphasizes the centrality of the learner rather than the supremacy of the subject matter or of the teacher' In my experience of the Silent Way, the supremacy of both teacher and subject matter was unmistakable.

Community Language Learning

CLL, also referred to as 'Counselling-Learning', is the approach developed by the late Charles A. Curran and his associates in the United States during the 70's.

The following is a summary of the principles of CLL.

(i) Resistance is inherent in any adult learning situation.

A cornerstone of CLL teaching-learning philosophy is that the adult learning process is hindered by primitive ego-defence patterns which block learning. These ego-defensive reactions take the form of withdrawal, rationaliza-

tion, avoidance of risk-taking, etc. Curran claims that these defensive reactions are inevitable because the learning situation is fraught with anxiety for the adult learner The adult learner's feelings of anxiety and insecurity are caused by a number of factors. Among these are his ignorance of the foreign language, his fear of failure, or earlier bad experiences with language learning. The first step in teaching and learning therefore, is to rid the adult learner of his negative feelings.

Curran (1972) also asserts that a prerequisite for effective learning is *'optimal regression'* to attitudes and behaviour of childhood. Partly as a means for expediting this desirable regression on the part of the learner, Curran emphasises that the 'knower', that is, the teacher in CLL terminology, should have training in basic counselling skills. This means, among other things, that the teacher must abandon his natural 'questioning, doubtful manner' towards the learner and replace it with 'unconditioned positive regard'; and to respond in a 'warm, secure, reassuring way' which will convey a deep understanding of the learner's anxious, insecure state. This, in brief, is the 'counselling response' which is practised by CLL teachers.

(ii) Human Learning is whole-person learning.

Curran entitles his book, *Counselling-Learning. A Whole Person Approach for Education* and is, therefore, the originator of the term 'whole person' which is used to refer to the humanistic approach. In 'whole-person' learning, the student is engaged at all levels of personality· the cognitive, the emotional. CLL considers as fundamental the role played by effective factors in learning and sets out to established a climate of security for the learner For Curran, the conditions for effective learning can be summed up by the acronym SARD which stands for Security, Attention-Aggression, Reflection-Retention, and Discrimination. These elements have been elaborated by Curran and others in various publications. Here, it is sufficient to point out that the Curran model makes provision for learner self-assertion (Attention-Aggression).

(iii) The individual learns through and with others.

According to Curran (1972.12) students do not learn alone but together with others in groups. The initial task of a CLL group, therefore, is to become more than a collection of individuals, to become, indeed, a community 'Community' as opposed to 'group', is formed by an agreement to work together with others (interpersonal process) towards a goal (e.g. mastery of the foreign language).

(iv) Human learning moves through a five-stage process.

According to Curran (1972:130-5), the learner grows into the new language like a living person, from dependence to independence. He likens the stage a learner goes through to birth and childhood (Stages 1 & 2), adolescence (Stages 3 & 4), and finally, adulthood (Stage 5). According to the degree of independence that the learner shows at a given time, he is said to be at one of the five stages.

Procedure

The basic procedure of CLL has two main steps: 'investment' and 'reflection'. In the investment phase, the learner engages in a conversation with other

members of the learning community In the reflection phase, the learner reflects on what he has done in the investment phase. Mechanically, the procedure is uncomplicated. The learners (about 10-15), 'client' in CLL terminology, sit in a closed circle. The 'knower' or counsellor-teacher, is outside the circle. When a learner wants to say something, she/he would raise a hand or beckon the teacher who would then go behind the learner The learner would say in the common language what she/he wants to say and to whom and the teacher would give it back, a word at a time or phrase by phrase in the target language. The group overhears the communication between the learner and teacher but they have no part in it. The learner is allowed to rehearse the utterance till he is satisfied before restating it to whomsoever is being addressed in the group, recording it on a tape-recorder at the same time. Then it becomes someone else's turn to continue the conversation.

At the end of the conversation, that is, the investment phase, the students talk about the experience in its cognitive, emotional and physical aspects. The knower listens to what is said and reflects it back in the learners' native language, in an understanding and non-critical way. This is the first part of the reflection phase. The second part of reflection consists of playing back the recorded conversation firstly, without interruption and secondly, sentence by sentence. Each learner supplies the translation of the sentences for which he was responsible. At the end of the lesson, the teacher takes away the cassette to transcribe the conversation. At the beginning of the next lesson, the students are given copies of the transcript containing corrections that the teacher has made. The text of the taped conversation is used as the basis of a simple grammatical analysis of the target language. The only materials used in the basic procedure are the tape recordings of the conversations and daily transcripts of the sessions prepared and distributed by the teacher Students, engaged in CLL, do have access outside of class, to conventional grammar books and ancillary procedures are sometimes used in the class session itself

Comments

The most fundamental difference between CLL and other teaching methods is the relationship between the learner and the teacher or knower It is modelled on the counsellor-client relationship in therapy In the investment phase, a student in Stage 1, relies on the teacher to provide him with all the language he needs to carry on a conversation, he is totally dependent on the teacher The 'handicapped communication' that is carried on at this stage can be considered, according to Curran (1972.129), as 'an embryonic involvement between mother and child. The child exists totally in and through the mother' The initial anxiety of the learner is assuaged by the security of this relationship.

In Stage 2, the 'self-assertion' stage, the learner begins to assert his own growing independence. This is seen in the attempts made by the learner to say what he wants to say in the foreign language without waiting for the teacher to feed it to him, using words and phrases he has picked up from the teacher 'The infant has begun to kick in the womb' (1972:131).

Stage 3 is the 'birth' or 'separate existence' stage. The teacher-counsellor encourages the learners to speak directly in the foreign language without him. The learners then refer to him only when they need a word or phrase. Curran

points out that later in this stage the learner may resent the teacher and react indignantly if the latter is over-solicitious and gives help in areas where the learner is striving to gain independent ability. He states that 'such personal indignation is a necessary assertion on the part of the learners, indicating that they do not wish to stay in the previous stages of dependency' (1972:131). The end of Stage 3 can be regarded as corresponding to the child beginning to walk.

Stage 4, the 'reversal' or 'adolescent' stage, represents a crucial transition in the knower-learner relationship. The learner, at this stage, becomes secure enough to be able to take correction, the knower intervenes freely at any kind of error At this stage, learners become 'counsellors' extending to knowers who are in this sense now their 'clients' the same understanding and acceptance that knowers gave to them in the early stages. This is essential if the learner is to acquire a more refined command of the foreign language. Otherwise, the knower may, out of fear of offending the learner, hesitate to give the learner the refinements and subtleties in the foreign language that he knows. Curran uses the blocking between the learner and knower in stage 4 to explain 'fossilization' There are people who remain all their lives speaking 'broken' English, French, etc. because their apparent ease and freedom in conversation make it difficult for knowers around them to help further because it may be seen as impolite.

Stage 5 is that of final independence of the learner from the knower Though the Stage 5 learner is independent, the knower may intervene to add idiomatic usage and improve style. Interestingly, the Stage 5 learner can act as counsellor to other less advanced learners. As he counsels 'embryonic' learners in Stages 1, 2, and 3, he can still, at the same time, receive subtle improvements of his language from the knower

In terms of general humanistic learning and teaching, CLL comes close to meeting all the characteristics outlined earlier It shows in theory and practice the clearest exemplification of the whole-person approach to teaching and learning. Attention to the affective dimension of personality is seen in the support and security provided by the knower to the learner and especially in the manner it is given. Cognitively, the learners are engaged in meaningful tasks — that of taking part in actual conversations. The reflection phase gives further opportunities for cognitive work as the students engage in grammatical analysis of the target language using texts in which they have an affective stake as they have produced them or 'invested' in themselves, motivation to work on them is correspondingly high. The CLL class also introduces a communicative situation right from the beginning as the teaching of language begins at the level of ordinary communicative interactions. CLL is unique in that it is one of the few language teaching methods which sets out to foster conversation. CLL is learner-centred as learning and teaching take the form of learners 'talking with one another about subjects that interest them as one critic puts it. CLL is also non-corrective as the 'counselling response' involves simple face value acceptance of a contribution from a learner as being worthwhile in its own right, without need for value judgement. It also bases learning and teaching on the creation of a community of learners oriented towards a particular task, that of mastery of the foreign language. This principle of

'supportive learning' is implemented in the classroom by the teacher main-
taining silence — unless called upon — in the group, allowing the learning to
be shared by the learners themselves. The CLL classroom is also democratic.
The students themselves select the topics to be discussed and initiate every
interaction themselves. This does not mean that the entire responsibility for
the learning experience is turned over to learners. The CLL teacher does a
great deal, perhaps more than the conventional teacher, in terms of structur-
ing activities, setting limits regarding specific learning tasks, making
judgements about classroom management and correctness of language. Most
of all, the CLL teacher has the crucial responsibility of monitoring the flow
of events in the classroom in such a way that the individual learner is not
overwhelmed.

Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia or Suggestopedy is a philosophy of learning and teaching
that arouses strong feelings. passionate conviction among its believers and
deep suspicion among the orthodox. The fervour of the former has caused
one critic to comment that it is more a religion than pedagogy

Suggestopedia originated in the 60's in Sofia, Bulgaria and has spread not
only to countries in the Soviet bloc but also to countries in Western Europe
as well as Canada and the United States. In Bulgaria, thousands of primary
school children are learning all subjects by this method but outside Bulgaria,
Suggestopedia is mainly associated with the teaching of foreign languages to
adults. Its status as a serious teaching method was assured in 1978 when
UNESCO sponsored an international conference in Sofia on 'Suggestology and
Suggestopedia, Theory and Practice' Evaluation of the practical results of
the methodology resulted in the consensus arrived at by the delegates that
Suggestopedia is generally superior as a teaching method for many subjects
and for many types of students, compared with traditional methods' (Schuster
& Miele, 1978).

Suggestopedia is a method that lies outside the files of orthodox teaching
principles. Perhaps this is not surprising: its creator, Dr Georgi Lozanov,
is a true outsider (as is Charles Curran of CLL), a doctor of medicine, a
psychiatrist and parapsychologist. Through his experience in the medical pro-
fession Lozanov became convinced of two facts. The first of these is the enor-
mous potential of the human brain and the very small part of it that is nor-
mally used. The other is the power of suggestion. Lozanov, after 20 years
of study and experiment, claims that he has discovered principles and
developed strategies for utilising some of what he calls the 'reserve powers'
of the brain. He believes this is 90% of the brain's potential.

As a psychiatrist who employed hypnosis, Lozanov studied the power of
suggestion under hypnosis as well as in the conscious state. His research con-
vinced him that under certain conditions, suggestion on a conscious level can
be just as powerful as suggestion applied to subjects under hynopsis. Lozanov
has evidence to support this theory He used suggestion alone to anaesthesize
a patient undergoing major abdominal surgery This remarkable feat is record-
ed on videotape.

The divorcing of suggestion from hynoptism led him to study suggestion in a non-clinical setting. Lozanov created the science of suggestology to make a systematic study of the role of suggestion in all branches of human life - medicine, art, commerce, advertising and most important of all, education. Suggestopedia is the application of suggestological principles to learning and teaching.

Assumptions

Suggestopedia is based on three important assumptions.

(i)   That learning involves the conscious as well as the unconscious functions of the brain.

(ii) That people are able to learn at rates many times greater than what we commonly assume to be the limits of human performance (public attention was caught by the claim that experimental subjects learned the meaning of 1000 foreign words in one day Hence, Suggestopedic learning is also called 'accelerative learning').

(iii) That learning is held back by (1) the 'suggestive norms' of society, that is, the set of assumptions concerning the limitations on our ability to learn that is the result of our upbringing in society — a kind of psychological straitjacket, and (2) the lack of armonious collaboration between the conscious and the unconscious

The strategy of Suggestopedia, therefore, is to circumvent these barriers to learning, that is, the 'suggestive norms', through a process of desuggestion and suggestion. The teacher can, on the one hand, 'desuggest' the limitations

suggest instead capacity for higher levels of performance.

In his book, *Outline of Suggestology and Suggestopedy* (1978) Lozanov lists three principles of Suggestopedia. The first of these i s the 'principle of joy and psycho-relaxation' Only if students are mentally relaxed and enjoying the instruction will they be able to use some of their 'reserve powers' Most teachers recognise that anxiety and boredom are the main obstructions in learning. Lozanov is unusual in building his teaching method on this presupposition. Joy and relaxation are the prerequisites of all effective, fast learning. In language learning, this means that students must feel comfortable, unthreatened, secure, and at the same time interested, amused and involved in meaningful activities involving the new language. Only in this relaxed and happy state will learners respond to the teacher's desuggestion/suggestion, encouraging them to perform beyond their normal expectations

The second principle of Suggestopedic teaching is that the conscious and unconscious must support each other It implies that teachers should not only control what is happening on the conscious plane (that is, the overt content of the lesson) but also attempt to control some of the things that affect the learners on the unconscious plane.

The third principle is gaining access to and mobilizing the 'reserve powers' of the brain.

Means of Suggestion

Lozanov lists a number of features in the learning environment that he calls 'means of suggestion' which are utilised by the Suggestopedic teacher Paramount among these is 'authority' The term 'authority' as used by Lozanov must not be confused with authoritarianism. his concept of authority is entirely benign. The term is used in the sense of having the prestige of knowledge and apparent competence. It is the authority of the teacher and of the course that persuades learners to change their 'suggestive norm', their assumptions about their powers to learn.

Lozanov draws attention to the powerful influence in human interaction of intonation, voice quality, posture and gesture which are reacted to unconsciously by the observer or hearer Orators, demogogues, popular preachers use these paralinguistic features with great effect. Good teachers too are proficient in their use, presumably by intuition as little attention is given to them in conventional teacher training. The efficient use of paralinguistic features is seen by Lozanov as a 'suggestive means' and he gives his own term for it, 'double-planeness'

Through authority and double-planeness teachers relax their students and enable them to reach a state of what Lozanov's translator calls 'infantilisation', in English, 'regression' In this stage, the learner becomes more open, malleable, spontaneous, creative and more ready to experiment - aptitudes and attitudes of childhood. It is in this state that 'hypermnesia' or 'super-memory' becomes possible.

The fourth means of suggestion is 'concert pseudo-passivity'. It refers to the state of mind that one adopts on sitting down to a concert of classical music — calm, relaxed, expectant, without responsibility Lozanov believes that in this state of mind the learner hears and remembers more than if straining to listen and understand and memorise. The student looks passive but this passivity is 'psuedo' in fact, much is happening in the student's mind, conscious and unconscious This phenomenon will be referred to again later

Procedure

The model for all courses run on Suggestopedic lines comes from the Institute of Suggestology in Sofia. These courses are designed to teach primarily the spoken language. Each course runs for four weeks with four hours of instruction a day There are ten units of study. Each unit consists of a long dialogue printed parallel to a native-language translation and numerous activities that draw on or 'elaborate' what is in the dialogue.

There are two main phases in each unit of study, a presentation phase and an exploitation phase. The presentation phase which lasts for about an hour is made up of three separate readings of the dialogue; students can ask questions in their native language. Answers are also given in the native language in order to reduce anxiety The second and third readings are the 'concert sessions', one active and the other 'passive' During these concert sessions, the teacher gives a highly skilled and somewhat dramatic reading of the dialogue against a background of classical music, usually baroque (Bach, Vivaldi, Handel, etc.). In the second reading, the 'active' concert, the students follow the printed text with its parallel translation For the third reading, the

'passive' concert, students are invited to put aside their books, lean back in their chairs and listen with closed eyes. The teacher reads the dialogue, changing the intonation of her voice to suit the music, whispering, triumphant, etc. The voice of the teacher is perceived as one instrument among the others in the music. If students ask whether they should listen to the words or music they are told to listen to the music. This is the 'pseudo-passive' phase of the lesson in which new vocabulary is learned via peripheral perception. It reveals another feature of Suggestopedic teaching: the importance given to peripheral learning.

The course is strictly time-structured. The new dialogue is always introduced at the end of the day This is done so that students sleep on the dialogue before it is practised. Students are asked to read the dialogue just before they go to bed and on arising the next morning. This is part of the Suggestopedic strategy for encouraging the conscious parts of the mind to work together harmoniously

The exploitation of the dialogue takes the whole of the next day and part of the following. Then another new dialogue is introduced during the last part of the third day

The five hours of the exploitation phase are spent practising the language of the dialogue. The activities are referred to as 'elaborations' The language practice work in always in the form of games, songs, rhymes, dramatic episodes, even jokes. Much of the linguistic benefit of a drill without its negative force is gained in the Suggestopedic classroom by the use of a ball. The throwing and catching of the ball become the main focus of attention — the language work is 'peripheral', and the students are helped to remain 'infantilised' In this happy and mentally relaxed state, linguistic material is readily and easily absorbed and retained

Suggestopedic teaching lays great stress on students being mentally relaxed. The suggestopedic classroom is more like a sitting room than a conventional classroom. Students and teacher sit in a circle in upholstered armchairs and enjoy the comfort of carpets, curtains, pictures and good lighting. These amenities are considered as an aspect of 'double-planeness' — silent suggestion that the course is relaxed and comfortable.

Besides these physical aids to relaxation, 'psycho-relaxation' techniques are also used. One of these is the use of translation as a means of reducing anxiety, seen in the parallel translation in the native language which accompanied the dialogues. Another psychological aid to relaxation is the adoption of surrogate identities by the students. Students are given new names, professions, addresses which they retain throughout the course. This provides the students with a high degree of security It is the fictitious characters that students have assumed and not the students themselves who are felt to be responsible for any error The materials also contribute in reducing tension The characters in the dialogues are the alter egos of the fictitious characters that students have assumed. They are all happy, well-adjusted, successful people. The events in the dialogues involve these characters resolving uncertainties, making choices and overcoming difficulties, but the choices are pleasant ones and difficulties minor and short-lived.

The artistic aids to relaxation are the music which forms a part of the 'concert session', and the ballet-like body movement of the teacher

Comments

How does Suggestopedia fit into the general framework of humanistic language teaching?

It is whole-person learning and teaching. Lozanov stresses that 'teaching must be global' Suggestopedic teaching directs its process to all aspects of the learner's personality There is not only recognition of the important role played by affective factors in learning, but specific means — the 'means of suggestion' — are deliberately employed to ensure that the affective and cognitive dimensions support each other in the learning process.

Like most humanistic approaches, Suggestopedia sees second language learning by adults as essentially different from first language learning. Like CLL, it also regards as a requisite for effective learning, the openness, malleability, creativity, spontaneity which characterised child first language learning. The Suggestopedic term for this is 'infantilisation', the CLL term for this is 'optimal regression' The games, songs, rhymes, and other activities which emphasize joy and fun are use to 'infantilise' the adults in the Suggestopedic classroom

Suggestopedia also subscribes to the belief that a secure learning environment is essential for effective learning. The use of translation, surrogate identities as well as the authoritative supportiveness of the teacher are some of the means of reducing anxiety and tension. Like CLL. it also avoids the danger of setting up an evaluative atmosphere in which learners have their mistakes pointed out to them as 'mistakes' The Suggestopedic teacher does correct some errors but quickly and as an aside. Praise is also avoided because it suggests that the learner has done something 'difficult' To describe something as 'difficult' is in itself a 'negative suggestion'

Unlike CLL, Suggestopedia does not attempt to set up communicative situations from the very beginning. In the exploitation of the dialogue, however, there is much communicative use of language in the playing of games, in preparing sketches and in acting them out.

Suggestopedia, like the Silent Way, places much faith in the potential mental powers of the ordinary student. The Silent Way sees the task of activating these powers as one of posing cognitive challenges. Suggestopedia attempts to do this by facilitating the harmonious collaboration of the conscious and unconscious.

Suggestopedia is 'learner-centre' teaching. Much attention is given to providing activities that will interest learners as well as amuse them. Any potentially dull activity is made into games, or at least carried out in a game-like way Little attention however, is given to future communicate requirements of learners in the target language.

The Suggestopedic classroom is anything but a power vacuum. Teacher 'control' is firm throughout the lesson though the authority she asserts rests more on her apparent competence than in any overt form of discipline. The teacher also exercises much of the 'initiative' in the beginning but allows the students a great deal of initiative in the later stages of the exploitation phase of the dialogue. The schedule of a Suggestopedic course is very rigid and students are not invited to contribute to decisions about what to do next. This highly structured approach is considered necessary in reducing students' anxiety by suggesting order and efficiency

Suggestopedia does not set out to establish a genuine community in the manner of CLL. The community, if one can call it one, at the beginning is highly artificial, made up of the fictitious characters assumed by the learners. In the later activities, however, there is considerable cooperation among the students in preparing sketches and acting them out.

Compared with CLL, Suggestopedia is relatively conventional in the kind of contact that students have with the target language. Its principal materials are a series of long dialogues all revolving round the theme 'Man and Nature Conference' Suggestopedia does not therefore produce the degree of self-investment of the student in the materials that we find in CLL.

In technique too, there is nothing there that is unusual. Games, songs, sketches, etc. are also used in other methods. The difference lies in the skilful way the elements in the course are integrated and the skilful orchestration of physical, verbal and aesthetic elements.

Psychodrama

Psychodrama is the latest arrival to the humanistic scene and is still considered very much a 'fringe methodology', perhaps more so than those methodologies already described. As far as I know, there are only two places where Psychodrama language teaching is practised, one in Paris, at the Centre 'Expression Spontanée Dramaturgique et Linguistique (C.E.S.D.E.L)' and at Mainz University in Germany In both places it is used for teaching French as a foreign language.

As in CLL and Suggestopedia, Psychodrama emphasizes that all aspects of the learner's personality — physical, emotional, intellectual — must be engaged in the learning process. Psychodrama also focuses on the reduction of anxiety and tension in learning and on the creating of an emotionally secure learning environment. However, the means by which it does this are quite different from the other two methods as we shall see. It is similar to CLL in the type of supportive relationship established by its teachers with their learners.

The stated objective of Psychodrama is to develop in learners the aptitudes and attidues necessary to communication, rather than mastery of the content of the foreign language or technical 'know-how' The learning of foreign languages by this method is seen in the context of the self-development of the individual in relation to the people around him.

The various techniques and exercises used in Psychodrama are not chosen on the basis of linguistic criteria but for their value in developing the desirable aptitudes and attidues. These include openness, receptivity, willingness to listen to others; confidence in oneself and in others, relaxed concentration) as in Suggestopedia); empathetic attitudes; intuitive comprehension, global perception; physical, affective, intellectual flexibility; willingness to take risks and accept errors, sensitivity; etc. These aptitudes and attitudes are latent in the individual but have to be developed.

The method originated from two independent traditions psychotherapy and the theatre. From psychotherapy it borrows a number of ideas from psychodrama as practised by J.L. Moreno. In therapeutic psychodrama, the patient is led to objectify and understand his problem by spontaneously ac-

ting it out. The psychotherapist helps the patient by empathising with him, even acting as his 'double' or auxiliary ego.

The aim of a Psychodrama language course, however, is to teach a language and not to solve the learner's problems. But what pedagogic Psychodrama has borrowed from therapeutic are the theoretical basis, the idea of spontaneous creativity, the idea of empathy between teacher and learner (in place of between psychotherapist and patient), certain techniques, in particular, the 'double', the 'mirror', role-reversal and the use of group dynamics.

From the theatrical tradition, Psychodrama has borrowed breathing and relaxation exercises, the use of masks, technique of stage training, theatrical forms of expression such as mime, sketch, and so on. From Greek drama it has borrowed the concept of agonist and protagonist. The teacher is the 'agonist' who pushes the student to complete the action. The student is called the 'protagonist', that is, the one who completes the action.

Psychodrama is primarily a method for initiating adults into the foreign language, quickly and painlessly It is meant for complete beginners, false beginners and people who have learned the language formally in school but are too inhibited to use it. Psychodrama language courses are usually run as intensive courses. Each course takes two weeks, 60 class hours, 5 hours per day Each group consists of 12 learners and two teachers or 'animators'

Procedure

There are two phases in Psychodrama, a receptive phase and an expressive phase. Each phase is preceded by a session of exercises. The receptive phase is preceded by relaxation exercises and the expressive phase by breathing exercises.

The receptive phase, as its name suggests, is to develop receptivity to the foreign language. Psychodrama attempts to do this by re-creating the warm, secure, emotional environment in which one learns one's mother-tongue. This is necessary in order to bring about a return to the childlike state of openness, spontaneity and creativity required for effective learning.

The first step is to cut the learners off from the outside world in order to free them from the tension of everyday life. Therefore, the session of relaxation exercises is introduced. Students lie in a circle in a darkened room and tension is gradually eliminated as students concentrate on each part of their bodies in turn and relax them to a series of verbal commands issued by the teacher

The relaxation session is followed by the exercise called the 'double' In this exercise three different masks are used to take the students through three succesive phases. The first phase begins when a student comes forward and puts on the first mask. This is a full mask — the wearer can neither see nor speak. By putting on this mask the learner centres all his attention on himself The teacher or 'animator' then goes and sits behind the learner putting a hand on his shoulder There is silence for a while as the animator tries to establish empathy with the learner Not only does she adopt the sitting position of the learner but gradually begins to adopt his pace of breathing. She then begins to speak, expressing what she thinks the learner is feeling at the moment. The learner listens while the rest of the group quietly observe. Each spontaneous sequence is repeated by the animator two or three times.

In the second phase of the exercise, the learner puts on the second mask. This is a half mask, the wearer's mouth is uncovered. The animator initiates another spoken sequence. The learner reproduces those parts of the sequence that she likes or is able to. The animator reinforces or expands these words or short phrases

In the third phase of the exercise, the half mask is replaced by a third mask with openings for the eyes and mouth. The learner still only chooses to reproduce what she wants from the spoken sequence initiated by the animator But she is led progressively by the rhythm of the animator's voice to go further and further into the language. The learner now does not confine himself to reproducing words, but also phrases, sentences and reproducing these with more assurance. The teacher picks up the utterances of the student and expands them. These is a hint of the beginning of a dialogue.

These three phases of the exercises are repeated in turn with each student in the group. This exercise, the 'double', gives the learner emotional security as verbal expression is taken over by the animator who 'doubles' for him. He thus develops enough confidence to play with rhythm, sound, melody, words and expressions of the foreign language. Through this the alienness of the foreign language is reduced and the learner becomes comfortable with the language.

On the second day of the course, the expressive phase begins with an exercise called the 'mirror' The teacher puts on a half mask. The learner with whom she is working will also wear a half mask. They sit facing each other, the student copying the sitting position of the animator like a reflection in a mirror The teacher concentrates on herself for a few moments then starts speaking, expressing what she feels. The student listens and echoes what she can of the animator's utterances. In the later stage of this exercise, the teacher attempts to begin a dialogue with the student.

On the third day, the activity consists of a number of dialogues. This time the learner initiates speech by uttering a word, phrase, or sentence which is developed into a sequence with the help of the animator who 'doubles' for him. The animator then attempts to start a conversation with the learner with this sequence. The conversation is disturbed by the intervention of a second animator seated some distance away from the learner The intervention takes the form of a question or a questioning tone, expression of doubt or surprise. The purpose of the intervention and the entry of the second animator is to turn the teacher-learner relationship into one which includes the outside world. The first animator quickly moves behind the learner when the intervention begins and 'doubles' for him, helping him to reply to questions or objections put forward by the second animator, the 'intruder' The student feels supported and gradually begins to reply on his own with a word or phrase which the animator expands.

In the later dialogues the students attempt to converse with each other, first, with teachers acting as their 'doubles', then on their own as teachers withdraw more and more into the background. The teachers no longer produce the language for the students, their help being limited to corrections or suggesting better expressions, both done very unobtrusively

In the middle of the second week of the course, the students are given texts with dramatic content, for example, poems, fairy tales, myths, or dramatic episodes. The text serves as the starting point of a series of dramatisation in which the students take on the role of the different characters and give it their own interpretation.

Comments

Psychodrama stresses the global development of the learner's personality The emphasis seems to be more on the physical and emotional dimensions of personality. Many of the activities for example, the voice exercises, breathing exercises, body movement exercises, are intended to develop the learner's awareness of his own body as well as his confidence. Affectivity has a very important place in the method as seen in the emphasis given to language expressing feelings and emotions and also to creating an emotionally secure learning environment.

Psychodrama's view of second-language learning is similar to that of Community Language Learning, that is that it involves and necessitates regression into the attitudes and aptitudes of childhood.

The attention given to creating an anxiety and tension-free learning environment has already been mentioned. The approach is also non-corrective. Correction when it occurs is done as unobtrusively as possible and takes the form of suggestions offered by the teacher, which the learner is free to accept or reject. The emphasis is not on 'mistakes' as such but on better, more expressive alternatives.

Communicative competence is viewed primarily in Psychodrama as the ability to perceive intended as opposed to stated meaning in utterances. Much attention is given to developing in learners an understanding of meaning and the ability to convey it by paralinguistic means such as gestures, body posture, etc. The role of suprasegmental features in conveying meaning in spoken language such as intonation, rhythm, stress is also emphasized.

Psychodrama is also concerned with what learners themselves bring to the learning task. It is believed that the desired attitudes and aptitudes in learning a language are latent and need to be drawn out and developed rather than created.

Psychodrama takes the concept of 'learner-centredness' even further Though the animator takes over verbal expression from the learner in the early stages, she expresses only what she thinks or feels the learner is feeling. In traditional methods it is up to the learners to understand the teacher and the textbook writer In Psychodrama the situation is reversed. It is the teacher's or animator's responsibility to perceive what the learner wishes to express and to provide him with the necessary linguistic means of doing so.

The distribution or balance of power in the classroom is also an important issue in Psychodrama. As in Community Language Learning, the learner is weaned from dependence to independence in stages However, in Psychodrama, the relationship between the teacher and learner is one of empathy.

Learning is also believed to the most effectively done within the framework of mutual support and co-operation offered by groups. Thus group activities and group dynamics figure prominently in Psychodrama.

Concluding Remarks

We have looked at four unconventional methods of language teaching: the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia and Psychodrama. It now remains to round up the discussion by outlining the main differences and similarities in the way these methods interpret the principles of humanistic teaching outlined earlier

1 Whole-person learning

The Silent Way differs from the other three methods in its approach to this issue. The Silent Way concentrates mainly on the cognitive aspects of personality whereas the other three methods give equal emphasis to the affective aspects. In Psychodrama, much attention is given as well to the physical aspect of personality in learning.

2. First versus second-language learning

All the four methods perceive adult second-language learning as a fundamentally different process from first-language learning in children. The Silent Way sees the problem as the posing of challenges of a cognitive kind while the other three methods see the problem more in terms of attitudes. They stress 'regression' or 'infantilisation' in order to return to openness, spontaneity, creativity — characteristics present in the child and which are considered necessary for effective learning.

3 Secure learning environment

Not much explicit attention is given to this issue in the Silent Way. Unlike the other three methods which allow the learner to be dependent on the teacher to a considerable degree in the early stages the Silent Way forces the learner to be independent right from the beginning. Furthermore, the conversations which the learners originate in Community Language Learning and the spoken sequences initiated by the teacher in Psychodrama would pose challenges which the Silent Way teacher, concerned with the grading and sequencing of structures, would find inappropriate for learners at these early stages. The same objection would also apply to the deluge of materials that Suggestopedia learners meet with at the beginning. The large amount of 'luxury' or 'non-basic' vocabulary to which learners are exposed in the other three methods would be regarded in the Silent Way as diverting energy from the learning of the more basic parts of the language.

The openness and independence which the Silent Way demands of the learner from the very beginning would be regarded as impossible in Community Language Learning as these are Stage 4 characteristics. The other three methods would also find the non-commital attitude and lack of warmth in the Silent Way teacher unacceptable and undesirable.

4. Communicative from the very beginning

This is really only true of Community Language Learning where learners attempt to use the target language to say what they want to say right from the start. In the other methods communicative use of language only comes in at the later stages.

5 Potential of learners

The Silent Way and Suggestopedia are comparable in the absolute faith that they have in the reserve powers of learners which can lead to extraordinary learning. However, while the Silent Way requires the learner to work things out for himself, this is something Suggestopedia neither requires nor allows in case the struggle suggests inadequacy and gives rise to self-doubt. Suggestopedia emphasizes joy and relaxation in learning whereas the Silent Way accepts the occasional temporary frustration in learning.

6. Learner-centred

All four methods emphasize the centrality of the learner in the learning process — the subordination of teaching to learning. But the needs of learners in terms of specific future job requirements of target language are given little attention. The concern is with the 'here and now' of the learning situation — what actually goes on in the classroom itself.

7 Distribution of power in the classroom

The Silent Way and Suggestopedia do not allow as much initiative on the part of the students as the other two methods since they are both very highly structured in nature. The lack of fixed materials in Community Language Learning and Psychodrama appear undesirable in Suggestopedia because that would undermine the 'authority' of the teacher. So would the lack of obvious structure in Community Language Learning and Psychodrama. Even the self-effacing image of the teacher in Community Language Learning would be considered as contribution to learner's anxiety in Suggestopedia.

8 Community feeling of all 'pulling together'

This feature is present in all four methods. However, the Silent Way is different from the other three in regarding the individual as being essentially alone in the learning process and in emphasizing the necessity of coming to terms with it. The Silent Way's philosophy advocates throwing the learner upon himself In Community Language Learning and Psychodrama, group life is of paramount importance. Both these methods emphasize learning a language through and with others. In Suggestopedia, however, the community of surrogate identities is prefabricated and totally artificial. It expects, in ways that are not entirely clear, the community to 'come to life' as the course progresses.

I hope the above summary and discussion of the four methodologies will dispel the notion that they can be lumped indiscriminately together It is certainly true that they share common characteristics, especially at the philosophical level. However, their actual implementation in the classroom indicates that there are fundamental differences in the way these philosophical principles are realised.

Whether we accept or reject these methodologies, we cannot deny that they have provided us with many fresh insights into language teaching and learning and suggest a possible re-definition of the role of the teacher Perhaps the most important of these insights is the crucial role of affective factors in the learning process. In recent years the emphasis on needs analysis has

led many of us to look upon learners' needs solely in terms of future communicative requirements of the target language in the form of occupational needs. Humanistic approaches acknowledge the importance of the learner's emotional needs — particularly the importance of the learner achieving an adequate basis of affective security from which to engage with the cognitively demanding task of acquiring foreign language skills Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs would support this view Maslow suggests five kinds of needs (1) basic physiological needs (2) safety needs (3) belongingness and love needs, (4) self-esteem needs, and (5) self-actualization needs (Maslow, 2nd ed. 1970). Affective needs (2) and (3) above, are lower-order needs which must be fulfilled to some extent before attention can be given to higher-order needs, (5) above. This suggests that in any methodology the emotional needs of learners must be taken very seriously As Early (1982:94) remarks, the best methodology in the world is wasted when the learner is on the defensive. when he is not 'open to input'

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