In the classrooms, one could observe over the years of increased input from the outside world, that foreign language students — a model for their German peers — opened their eyes to the world and became aware of the linguistic and cultural differences between the two cultures. This led to a shift towards a more active and communicative approach to language learning, encouraging students to engage in more authentic, real-world language use.

A good example of this can be seen in the shift towards task-based language teaching, which emphasizes the importance of language as a tool for communication and problem-solving. Instead of focusing on rote learning and memorization, overreliance on the language as a means to an end,

References

Further reading

Task-based teaching and assessment
Disadvantages of conventional linguistically-based syllabuses, along with a growing emphasis on the need for students to learn second (intercultural) languages, have led
A rationale for task-based language teaching

Most L2 syllabuses (and so-called language teaching 'methods') are high around one or more linguistic units of analysis, such as the word, grammatical structure, notion, and function. Course design starts with the language as to be taught, which, by the teacher or textbook writer, gets cut up into small pieces for presentation to students in serial fashion (usually in violation of fairly well attested developmental sequence). The result is a 'linguistic' syllabus of some kind, overt or covert. Syllabus content is a series of linguistic forms. These are delivered via 'synthetic methods', that is, through translation, explicit, grammar rule explanation, pattern drills, 'error correction', and linguistically simplified graded stories. The forms become the major focus of classroom lessons - so-called focus on form (Long, 1991; Long and Saitoh, 1998). The learners' job psycholinguistically is really or not, is to try to learn each item separately when it is presented, and then somehow make the parts work when they are needed for communication - hence, the term profile syllabuses (Williams, 1976).

There are numerous problems with focus on form, including lack of a learner needs analysis, the modesty of structurally graded materials to provide stilted language models, and resulting student boredom. While some writers talk place at such classrooms, desirable, rather than because of the approach used, results are generally poor and, unlike first language acquisition, highly variable. Most serious of all is the fact that synthetic syllabuses and synthetic language teaching 'methods' assume a model - an unattained list of isolated linguistic entities, each at its own rate, level, and time. A task-based approach, on the other hand, recognizes that learning is achieved by everything known about how people learn first or second languages. Far from quashing any word or structure at a time on demand, thirty years of second language acquisition research has shown that naturalistic, instructed and natural learners all exhibit gradual approximation to target norms. Progress as a new language is incremental, and rarely sudden and catastrophic. Learning goes through constant (possibly universal) stages of seemingly immutable developmental sequence. Studies have found instruction capable of speeding up progress through sequences, among other things, but incapable of enabling learners to skip stages, e.g. to jump straight from zero-knowledge of a structure to native-like use (a level very few learners ever attain). There is strong empirical evidence, and, more to the point, no counter-evidence, for the idea that teachers can only teach what learners are ready to learn, i.e. are capable of processing. Acquisition sequences do not reflect the instructional sequences embedded in externally imposed grammatical syllabuses.

One response to recognition of the power of the learner's internal language has been to abandon attempts to make code features altogether, and instead, to try to recreate in the ABLE classroom the conditions under which children learned their native languages so successfully. Students are provided with holistic samples of target language use, and the teacher's job is to make the input comprehensible. Whatever remains of natural human language-learning abilities ( innate or otherwise) is relied upon to allow students to induce the rules of the grammar through analyzing the input briefer, the term ability syllabuses (Williams, 1976). This approach has been called focus on form (Long, 1991; Long and Saitoh, 1998). It plays a role at a variety of foreign and second language programs, including immersion education, the Natural Approach, 'situated' subject matter teaching, and some content-based courses. Syllabuses and lesson content consist of general curricular subject matter or information about the foreign language culture and the people and societies using the language. Results from
EVALUATION: studies of Calabresi French immersion programs are encouraging. It is valuable, however, to develop another very high level of proficiency in a second language. Although only after several years of intensive and extensive exposure can it be acquired, this task is feasible for most children.

The limitation of focus on form and form on meaning described above, together with the theory and research findings on the importance of oral proficiency, and in facilitating its use in language learning, triggered development of a dual approach, known as focus on form (Doughty and Williams, 1986; Long, 1985; Long and Robinson, 1991). Arguably a defensible orientation for the implementation of any pedagogic syllabus, focus on form explicitly contradicts a more traditional view in Task-Based Language Teaching (see, e.g., Long, 1985). Focus on form refers to the use of a variety of pedagogic procedures designed to shift students' attention both to grammatical and linguistic features during an otherwise meaning-oriented lesson. The grammatical and linguistic features are targeted so as to require students to produce sentences with the correct forms and to provide feedback on the accuracy of the forms produced. As noted by Doughty and Williams (1986), it is the form of the target language that enables students to communicate effectively in a second language. The focus on form is also consistent with what is observed in everyday life and in the workplace, where accuracy is important.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) developed in the early 1980s (see, e.g., Long, 1985), particularly in response to the need for a focus on meaning via adoption of an analytically syllabus, which simultaneously through the use of more or less (not formal), to develop in a learner's thinking, especially from a developmental and introspective point of view, where grammatical accuracy is concerned. This is a major area of determining meaning and evaluating a TBLT programme.

1. Through a task-based approach, using multiple competitive methods and strategies (see Long, 1985), a learner's accuracy or relative communicative power is measured in terms of stage into real-world thinking and its everyday life for those learners, including related social discourse skills. Target tasks for foreign language learners include testing a student's awareness or perception of these tasks, and the varying extent of the intervention. The tasks can be predetermined locally by each teacher, such as, the appreciation of the teacher and the teacher's role in the choice, function, and validity of the task. Considerable discussion concerning (Long, 1985), as noted by Doughty, in press. Doughty and Williams (1986).

As noted by Doughty and Williams (1986), the focus is on form in order to ensure that students are familiar with the language, whereas focus on form is limited to a specific task, and focus on meaning refers to focus on action, which together with the preceding modes provides for more effective and efficient interaction, involving various types of activities, checking, exchanging ideas, planning, discussing, etc., which are all classified as "emphasizing emergency equipment."
3 Target task-types are given fresh and blood as teaching/learning materials in the form of graded sequences of pedagogic tasks, initially simple approximations of gradually increasing task (not linguistic) complexity, developed to meet these needs. To illustrate, for the target task-type "note-taking during academic lectures", students might initially complete a partly-finished set of notes while listening to a brief lecture in their subject area. Later, they might work on the same or longer lectures without an outline being provided, and so on.

4 Using a variety of non-linguistic criteria, e.g. number of steps, time and space of event occurrence relative to the speaker (see Robinson, in press), the pedagogic tasks are sequenced to form a task syllabus.

5 The task syllabus is implemented in the classroom (LANGUAGE LABORATORY, computer laboratory, etc.) via a brand-name language teaching method, or indeed by any one fixed method, but via appropriate methodology and pedagogy. Classroom methodology for TBLT has been designed to reflect putatively universal language-learning processes in the form of methodological procedures (such as focus on form), but with the principles instantiated by suitably particular pedagogy procedures, the purview of the classroom teacher (see Long, forthcoming). Whereas the principles are universal, pedagogic procedures should vary systematically according to local conditions.

6 A task-based programme is evaluated by gathering formative, summative, process and product data, a central component being ASSESSMENT of student achievement. A complex and rapidly developing area in its own right, task-based language assessment is described in more detail in the next section.

Task-based language assessment

Assessment associated with conventional linguistic syllabuses typically asks examinees to demonstrate knowledge about, rather than actual use of, the L2. A popular alternative is direct proficiency assessment, which requires performance of a range of tasks designed to elicit sufficient L2 data for the assessment, by trained rater[s], of holistic ratings according to global language proficiency scales (e.g. ACFTL, 1999). Neither of these approaches is appropriate for most assessment uses within task-based language programmes, where the goal is not to measure display of linguistic knowledge, but to assign learners to broadly defined levels of language ability, but to ascertain whether tasks and subtasks can use the L2 to accomplish target tasks.

As in task-based syllabus design and pedagogy, genuinely task-based language assessment takes the task itself as the fundamental unit of analysis, motivating item selection, test instrument construction and the rating of task performance. Task-based assessment (see, e.g., Norris et al., 1994; Robinson and Ross, 1996) does not simply utilize the real-world task as a means of eliciting particular components of the language system which are then measured or evaluated; instead, the construct of interest is performance of the task itself. Language performance goals, such as accuracy, complexity and fluency (see Skehan, 1998a), play a role in the evaluation of task-based performance only if inherently related to accomplishment of an assessment task.

There are six main steps in developing and implementing task-based assessment for task-based language programmes:

1. The intended set of tasks for task-based assessment within the language programme must be specified, minimally addressing the following four issues: who will use information from the assessment? (e.g. teachers and students within a university-level SPANISH FL programme); what information is the assessment supposed to provide? (e.g. learners' abilities to use Spanish for placing a dinner order at a restaurant in Guadalajara); what are the purposes for the assessment? (e.g. as an end-of-unit assessment to inform teachers and students as to whether or not students have acquired sufficient ability for using L2 Spanish to accomplish relevant target tasks); and who or what is affected, and what are the consequences of the assessment? (e.g. based on assessment results, teachers and students decide either to review how to place dinner orders in Spanish or to move on to new target tasks). (For more on assessment use specification, see McNamara, 1996; Sheppard, 1997).

2. Target tasks or task-sets need analysis are a variety of formal procedures undertaken in order to real-world conditions and tasks and should include: assessment conditions amount of L2 use, demands, number of in difficulty. Tasks according to similarities, this classification estimating examinees' related tasks. (For the Bachman and Palincsar.)

3. Based on information features, interface and text, tasks may or may not the format involves, tasks format for text task, tasks on the task and use for example, assessing the ability to deliver a topic might delivering the assessment part, course of study; examinee, character taught, task conducted, performance ensuring the lecture, lecture, sequence, etc., and attribution.

4. Perhaps the most is task-based language and specification in basis for interactivity and task forthcoming. Raaas, ggg, gzgg, and bodies that the aspects identified within specific course of with clear learners critical elements might be specific.
2 Target tasks or task-types emerging from the needs analysis are analysed and classified according to a variety of task features. Analysis is undertaken in order to understand exactly what real-world conditions are associated with target tasks and should therefore be replicated under assessment conditions (e.g. setting, type and amount of L2 use involved, non-linguistic demands, number of steps involved, and sources of difficulty). Tasks may also be classified according to similarities or differences in such features, the classification forming the basis for estimating examinees’ abilities with a range of related tasks. For discussion of task features, see Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Norris et al., 1999.  

3 Based on information from the analysis of task features, test and item specifications are developed (see Lynch and Davidson, 1994). Specifications delineate the format tests should take, procedures involved, tasks or task-types to be sampled, format for test items (items), and how performance on the task-based test should be evaluated. For example, a test specification for assessing the ability of an international teaching assistant to deliver a lecture on a field-specific topic might delineate: a general description of the assessment purpose and relationship to a course of study; instructions and input given to the examinee; characteristics of the topic to be taught; task conditions to be replicated during performance assessment (time allowed for preparing the lecture, location and setting of the lecture, uncooperative students in the audience, etc.); and attributes of task performance to be evaluated.  

4 Perhaps the most important stage in developing task-based language assessment is identification and specification of the units, which form the basis for interpretations of examinee performance and task accomplishment (see Norris, forthcoming). Real-world criterial elements (aspects of task performance that will be evaluated) and levels (descriptions of what success looks like on these aspects of task performance) should be identified within initial needs analyses, with a view toward providing students and teachers with clear learning Objectives. For example, criterial elements for the task ‘ordering a pizza’ might be specified to include such aspects as greeting and leave-taking behaviour, placing the order (including size and ingredients of pizza), and responding to clarification questions from an employee. Criterial levels for each of these elements might specify minimal amount and type of greeting/greeting expected, minimal information about the pizza to be successfully communicated, and type of evidence in the performance reflecting minimal comprehension and response to clarification questions.  

5 With any assessment, test items, test instruments and procedures and rating criteria need to be evaluated involving piloting reviewers and revision according to their efficiency, appropriacy and effectiveness with respect to the intended assessment uses.  

6 Finally, task-based language assessment should incorporate procedures for systematic and ongoing evaluation of its intended use within the language programme. Validation should minimally consider: to what extent test instruments and procedures are providing appropriate, trustworthy, and useful information; to what extent particular uses for the assessment are warranted, based on the quality of information that they provide and the decisions or actions that they inform; and to what extent the consequences of assessment use can be justified, given the impact on students, teachers, language programmes and any other relevant stakeholders in the assessment process (see Menick, 1990).  

See also Assessment and testing, Medically-oriented and message-oriented communication; Second language acquisition schemes; Syllabus and curriculum design; Teaching methods.

References
Teach the teacher: From foreign language teacher to foreign language educator

Further reading

Teacher educa


History

Foreign language teachers are typically found in classrooms, teaching a variety of instructional settings, including the teaching of foreign languages. However, the teaching of foreign languages can be a complex and challenging task. This requires not only a strong understanding of the language itself, but also a deep knowledge of the cultural and social contexts in which the language is used.
Further reading


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Teacher education

Language teacher education can be divided into foreign language teacher education and mother-tongue or national language teacher education. Although, especially in multilingual classes, there is considerable overlap in sociolinguistic terms between the two, we shall focus in this contribution on foreign language teacher education, leaving aside the potential overlap between the two. Foreign language teaching as an integrative discipline has taken place in the target language setting that allows the teacher and the learner to experience what is taught and learn the target language in a foreign context. The term ‘education’ for the teaching of foreign language teachers is used here instead of ‘teaching’, in keeping with the conviction that the latter term does not do justice to the complex process of helping teachers develop as reflective practitioners and true professionals (see Widowson, 1987, 20).

History

Foreign language teacher education does not have an impressively long history. When modern foreign languages came to be learnt and studied in an institutional setting in the nineteenth century, side-by-side with the classical languages Latin and Greek, the main emphasis, by analogy with the study of the latter two since the Renaissance, lay on the grammatical side of language. Teachers were required mainly to have a thorough insight into the way the language worked. How communication worked was not yet thought to be of great importance. Foreign language teacher education consisted of a study of the target foreign language and its literature in various comparable level. Sorting teachers entered the profession with a minimum of methodological knowledge or experience, and they learned their trade while practising. The central activity in their lessons was based on the Grammar-Translation Method, an approach which did not require a highly developed methodological approach.

In spite of protest at the beginning of the twentieth century against a too-mechanistic view of the study of Latin as grammar, it was not until well into the 1960s and 1970s that institutionalised modern foreign language teaching began to take into account that languages are means of oral, and not primarily written, communication. The cross-cultural aspect of such communication only began to be recognised in the 1980s.

In the second half of the twentieth century, late-nineteenth-century ideas about language learning for oral communication, as refined, for example, in the DIRECT METHOD, were revised and a branch of Lingvistrick termed APPLIED LINGUISTICS began to emerge. In the 1960s a new wave of the USA to equip soldiers fighting in Vietnam with a working knowledge of the local language in a relatively short period of time. It seemed useful if they could communicate with the local population. Thus the question is how languages are learnt because learning. A psychological approach to how humans learn is termed INNATE LEARNING because it involves a bit of behaviour and should therefore be learned according to this procedure (see AMERICAN ARMS METHOD).

Such emphasis on the Acquisition of a foreign language and its consequences for the teaching of it are behind the reasons for teaching qualifications other than the mastery of the grammar and lexicon of the foreign language. Teachers had to be able to