

THE PROBLEM OF MOTIVATION IN FRENCH  
LANGUAGE -LEARNING

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submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS ( in Education)

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

HOBART

JANUARY 4TH, 1963

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# I

## INTRODUCTION

These are days in which the spirit of inquiry is perhaps more alive than at any other time in the history of humanity.

Not only in the sciences is experimentation taking place. New methods of teaching are being tried out and tested, and the laboratory has invaded the language field.

The whole field of education is continually under review. Insistence is increasing that schools must provide an education suited to the needs of the modern world. This has led to a new appraisal of the value of various subjects.

It is generally agreed that the teaching of French in Australia is at the crossroads. In fact, the claims of modern language study itself have come under close scrutiny.

Many people feel that the results commonly achieved in modern language study are not commensurate with the time and energy expended. Many pupils leave school with little ability to understand the foreign language when it is spoken, with inadequate skill in using it either in speech or in writing, and with little facility in reading it.

Not only is there dissatisfaction with the results achieved in the learning of modern languages, but their value as a study could easily be lost sight of in the emphasis now being given to science and technology. Russian technical superiority recently demonstrated in their space flights has led to a struggle on the part of Western nations to overtake and surpass in this field.

It has already meant an increased emphasis on science subjects. If foreign languages cannot by their results justify their existence, they will become of less and less importance in the modern curriculum.

UNESCO has recently given a good deal of attention to the teaching of foreign languages. The Australian Unesco Committee for Education decided at its meeting in 1959 that a statement on the place of foreign languages in Australian education should be prepared, along with some suggestions for particular studies which might reasonably be undertaken in Australia to ascertain facts related to more fundamental issues, before time and energy were spent on enquiry into method. At its 1960 meeting the Committee considered a statement prepared for it by a small sub-committee which suggested that answers need to be given to three important questions:-

- (1) Should any foreign language be taught in Australian primary or secondary schools?
- (2) If it can be shown that a foreign language has adequate cultural and/or utility value to justify its inclusion in a school curriculum, which of the many languages available should be selected?
- (3) Are there more effective ways of obtaining the benefits of knowing a foreign language than by studying it in schools?

A statement, prepared in the main by the Commonwealth Office of Education, revealed clearly to the sub-committee that any effective knowledge of a modern language - effective enough to permit an Australian to read it readily or to speak it fluently -

cannot but be limited, under present circumstances, to very few, and that for most students such knowledge will be of either French or German. The sub-committee made it clear that it had no doubt that many Australians should, for one reason or another, know one or more foreign languages. WHAT IT HAD SERIOUS DOUBTS

ABOUT WAS WHETHER THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES IN AUSTRALIA AT  
(1)  
PRESENT MEETS THESE NEEDS (Emphasis Mine)

Along with the demand for re-appraisal of the value of modern language study in Australia has come a growing propaganda for Asian languages to be taught in Australian Schools to the exclusion of French or German. Two very good replies have been given to those who would like to see Chinese, Japanese, or Indonesian taught in our schools to the exclusion of the traditional French and German.

In August 1960, Professor I.H. Smith of the University of Tasmania, addressed a School of Method on "The Question of Oriental Languages in Australia." He pointed out the danger of orientalising our culture by cutting the links with the history, literature and cultural values of our European past which are necessary for our national survival.

In the new Monash University, only two foreign languages are being taught. "Why, the question may be asked, are we beginning with French and German at Monash? Why not Russian and Chinese? The answer for me is plain. We belong to Western civilization and we must begin by understanding more about our

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(1) Education News Vol. 7 No. 11 October, 1960 pp 3 - 6.

cultural heritage before we can fully comprehend that of the East." (2)

In a recent study of a century of French teaching in New South Wales and Victoria undertaken by Miss Wykes it has been found that the decrease in the proportion of children taking French has been spectacular. In New South Wales the proportion of candidates taking French at the Leaving Certificate fell from 62 per cent in 1943 to 34 per cent in 1956. At the new Melbourne Matriculation examination the proportion fell from 28 per cent in 1944 to 17 per cent in 1956, and at the Leaving Certificate (Class B schools only) the proportion fell from 62 per cent in 1943 to 34 per cent in 1956. And this decline was common to all the foreign languages. "It has been clearly demonstrated, says Miss Wykes, that Modern Languages, if unsupported by University regulations, cannot hold their own with the Social and Biological Sciences in the secondary schools in the second half of the twentieth century in Australia" (3)

Miss Wykes claims that the decline of foreign languages is not part of an alleged decline of the humanities as a result of the rise of the sciences in a technological age. She states that Statistics of the Public Examinations in both New South Wales and Victoria reveal this.

Since 1956, when those statistics were compiled, Russian

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(2) DR. A.R. BARRELL, HEAD OF MODERN LANGUAGES DEPT., (Monash University Babel No. 16 April 1961)

(3) A CHALLENGE FOR TEACHERS, OLIVE WYKES, (Babel No. 11, July , 1959 p 5)

space successes have shaken the world. They have led to demands both here and in U.S.A. for an increased emphasis on the sciences. Miss Wykes' figures therefore do not invalidate our argument that increased interest in science could well lead to a corresponding decrease in foreign language interest, especially when there is dissatisfaction with results achieved in foreign language study.

Until recently French was the second language taught in most Australian schools. It was taught in Australian Schools and Universities because it was taught in England.

Now its hegemony has gone. German is taught with it and in some schools to its exclusion. As we have said before, there is a growing demand that Asian languages be taught.

At the Camberwell Grammar School, Chinese is being taught; at the Methodist Ladies College, Kew, Russian has been introduced. To quote Miss Wykes "Many high hopes were entertained of French at various times, hopes that it would give a rigorous mental training, oral fluency, comprehension of a foreign literature and civilization, ability to read in the original. The decline of French must be attributed to failure, partial or complete, to accomplish these aims for the majority of secondary school children" (4) And in speaking of the decline in modern language study Miss Wykes pertinently asks "DOES THERE REMAIN SOME UNTRIED METHOD OF TEACHING LANGUAGES WHICH WILL MAKE THEM MORE ACCESSIBLE?" (5) (Emphasis mine)

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(4) Op. Cit. p.6 (Babel)

(5) " " " "

We claim that there is, and shall later offer a method which we have found unquestionably successful over a number of years. To sum up. The value of language study is being questioned.

The study of foreign languages generally has declined in Australian Schools. French has lost its old hegemony and rival languages are being advocated and studied, sometimes to its exclusion.

What is to be done to ensure that French, with all it has to offer the student, shall retain a secure place in the modern curriculum? The answer is that we must make our teaching so effective that its value as a discipline is plain for all to see. We can do this only if we know what are the problems which confront us, and if we can find a way to solve them.



## II

THE PROBLEM STATED

We maintain that there are three problems which have to be faced and solved if modern languages are to hold their rightful place in the school curriculum of to-day. They are (1) motivation (2) method (3) aim.

(1) THE PROBLEM OF MOTIVATION

In the case of a skill which takes a considerable period of time to acquire, the desire or will to learn is of immeasurable importance.

"Effective motivation", says Handschin, "is without question a sine qua non of successful teaching" (1)

An almost perfect motivation, as he points out, would be the certain prospect for each student for a good position in which he would need the language. As few pupils know, what need they will have of a modern language after they have learnt it, the teacher must apply such motivation as will call forth from the mind of the learner the powers which lie there. The desire to know must be aroused. To quote Handschin again "A first essential to effective learning is motivation that compels interest and challenges effort..... In some of the most important studies of pupil failures teachers attribute these up to 83% to 'indifference' of the student, and the students themselves think 68% of their failures are due to this cause." (2)

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(1) HANDSCHIN C.H. MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING (Yorkers on Hudson N.Y. World Book Company p.92)

(2) Ibid p. 283

Mere indifference, of course, is not a clue to the real trouble. It is a symptom rather than a cause.

Yet there is no initial trouble with motivation.

"The child brings into the class-room enormous goodwill and is more than ready to accept the challenge and embark on the new and exciting adventure that lies before him. The motivation is right. It is the teacher's responsibility not to kill it, and it is for that reason that none but the best and most experienced teachers should ever be placed in charge of a first year language form or set." (3)

At a School of Method held at the University of Tasmania, August 29-31, 1960, Miss J. Batt, Senior Lecturer in French at the University reached the heart of the matter when she said that the problem occurred in the second year. At the outset, the new language has a certain glamour. This, for a while, is sufficient to maintain the interest of the student. Later on, when difficulties are encountered, the need for maintaining interest is thrown upon the teacher.

"Most teachers of some years' experience, says F.M. Hodgson, are familiar with the phenomenon of classes of children who at the age of eleven are eager and enthusiastic in their approach to this new and exciting adventure of learning a second language and who five years later are disillusioned, bored and bewildered, unable to answer orally even the simplest questions or to produce

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(3) VERNON MALLINSON TEACHING A MODERN LANGUAGE (London  
Heinemann Ltd. 1953 p.44)

spontaneously in written form the elementary structures of the language they have studied." (4)

However eager and enthusiastic children are to learn a new language, however interested they are initially, this state of affairs does not last, and teachers are faced with a real problem of how to maintain this pupil interest and ambition.

## (2) THE PROBLEM OF METHOD

From the very beginning language teachers have been divided into two camps - the conservative or traditional or classical, on the one hand, and the progressive or modern, on the other. The moderns have won a very important point in that almost no one now contends that the aims of modern language study should not include the understanding and speaking of a foreign language or languages. But the conservatives are concerned lest the moderns content themselves with teaching mere conversational ability and neglect the humanistic values of modern language study. The moderns contend that mastery of language skills is a necessary beginning to a humanistic education in the language field. Thoughtful teachers of both schools wish to see language learning become part of education in the wider sense of the term. The problem goes far deeper, however, than a mere quarrel between the ancients and moderns. There is, in modern language teaching, no general agreement on any single method of approach - there is no infallible method. The hundred per cent direct method, as we shall show, has not fulfilled expectations. It is now being recognized that

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(4) HODGSON F.M. LEARNING MODERN LANGUAGES (London Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955 pp 2-3

not every class is capable of being taught in this way. H.F. Collins has summed up the situation. "The purely Direct Method can safely be adopted provided the right type of teacher and class is forthcoming. The method by its very nature presupposes a teacher of intense vitality, of robust health, and one endowed with real fluency in the modern language he teaches. He must be resourceful in the way of gesture and tricks of facial expression, able to sketch rapidly on the blackboard, and, in the long teaching day, he must be proof against linguistic fatigue. And he must have bright pupils. My own experience has taught me that in a school of 400 pupils, only one form in each year - in a school of 1,000, two forms in each year - can receive such instruction, and this provided the teacher is forthcoming." (5)

Dr. S.J. Scott, Lecturer in French in the University of Melbourne has recently been even more forthright on this point. He says he has met few students, other than specially gifted ones, who could be said to have 'immediate knowledge of things in French without the intermediary of English.' (6)

Most moderns use a modified direct approach. But the term 'modified-direct' can in actual practice include almost anything from lessons in which the foreign language is used almost exclusively (according to the fluency of the teacher and the ability of the class) to the giving of one dictation per week with or without a few minutes 'conversation' practice.

(5) Quoted by MALLINSON (Op. cit. p.18)

(6) DR. S.J. SCOTT GRAMMAR: CHAOS OR COSMOS? (Melbourne

In one large girls' school in Victoria a Frenchwoman takes each class for one lesson a week. In that lesson she gives either dictation, poetry recitation, or conversation. The rest of the teaching is done by the Senior Master and various mistresses who attempt to finish the courses prescribed by the University of Melbourne. Can one lesson per week, more or less oral, be described as 'modified-direct'?

In Australia the problem is further complicated by the fact that there are many non-specialist teachers of foreign languages and many have had no experience of the foreign country whose language they are teaching. In a recent survey of Tasmanian conditions by J.A. Hunt, 44 State teachers out of a total of 64 in French have had no foreign experience, and 23 out of a total of 37 French teachers in private schools are in a similar position. (7)

It is necessary also to remember that the study of modern languages can never be quite the same thing in Australia, so remote from Europe, as it is in an European country. There students may get a practical knowledge of a language by a stay in the particular country before graduating. The number of travelling scholarships Australian students can obtain are not nearly adequate and it does not appear likely that they ever will be.

Even if this state of affairs improves, we shall for a very long time have to face the fact that the bulk of those who study French or German in Australia, and even a large number of those who teach these two languages, will never have any direct contact

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(7) J.A. HUNT "MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN TASMANIA, 1961"

with the countries where they are spoken. If air travel ever becomes financially feasible for lower and middle income groups, more intimate contacts could be established with New Caledonia and more teachers and students have foreign experience.

Then again in many schools the teacher has to teach other subjects as well, and cannot devote himself exclusively to the foreign language. In some schools this problem is aggravated by the fact that, owing to staffing problems, teachers with very inadequate qualifications are pressed into language teaching. A few years ago, I had under me a young man who taught two French classes - one to Intermediate level. He had not even reached matriculation standard in the subject.

Teachers of languages in country schools in Australia have added difficulties owing to the comparative isolation of schools outside the metropolitan area and to the insularity of outlook in country communities.

In the capital cities of Australia foreign films and magazines are available and continental cafés, clubs and restaurants are open to the Australian public. In many country areas the pupils do not meet people of immediate European background. They do not see foreign literature and newspapers on the stalls, nor do they hear other languages spoken. Foreign films are not screened and the country pupil, if he wants to have such an experience, must travel to the capital cities. It is true that this year (1962) an excellent French programme "Chez les Dupre" is being presented on television. The French is delightfully clear and not

spoken too quickly, and the acting is excellent. Unfortunately not every school has television, nor do the times of presentation always coincide with French teaching periods. Fortunately this may be viewed on Sunday afternoons by those to whom television is accessible. But away from the capital cities, the National station cannot always be received because of the proximity of regional commercial stations whose educational and cultural programmes are not comparable with those of the national network.

The language teacher in country schools is cut off from organizations with cultural aims. Lectures, conferences, productions of plays, film nights, special School nights are nearly all organized and presented in the capitals. All these factors peculiar to the Australian scene must be considered when a special method is advocated. And tied up with this question of method, whether one teaches in the cities or in the country, is that biggest problem for the language teacher - that of saving time. He must not, in all conscience, waste his pupils' time. Therefore he has to consider whether the method adopted helps or hinders the accomplishment of that amount of work prescribed by the examination syllabus.

H.G. Palmer says that "The best method is that which adopts the best means to the required end." (8)

What is the 'required end'? This brings us to:-

(3) THE QUESTION OF AIM:

What do we, as modern language teachers, hope to achieve in

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(8) PALMER, H.G. THE PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE STUDY (London Harrap 1921 p.69)

the short time - anything from one to six years - that we have our pupils? How many of us have a definite goal towards which we are pressing?

In this country where the educational programme is greatly determined by University matriculation requirements, we cannot ignore the fact that this aim is the sole criterion according to which many teachers plan the content and method of their teaching programme. Yet it is well-known that comparatively few go on to University level. Statistics prepared in Victoria in 1947 show that of every 100 pupils who present themselves in Victoria for Intermediate Certificate French, only 5 reach matriculation and barely 1 reaches Part III at the University. (9)

It is also true that not all pupils continue with French even as far as the Intermediate. Although these conditions relate to 1947, the picture would not be so very different to-day. On this assumption it would seem that the studies of the mass of secondary pupils in Victoria is not prolonged. Similar conditions would obtain elsewhere in Australia, for the Australian setting is a remarkably homogeneous one. Our concern must be with this group. What will the ordinary boy and girl carry away? Our aim should be to provide a course that has value in itself and is not merely a preparation for advanced work.

University handbooks for Schools emphasize that part of the aim of the French Courses is to enable the pupil to read, write, speak and understand the language when it is spoken. Is not that rather Utopian considering Australian conditions? To how many

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(9) FREDERICK W.H. NEW EMPHASIS IN MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING



students even at tertiary level could that apply? We claim' that the aims of modern language teaching should be more realistic and more concise.

(a) It should not be a mere preparation for University work.

(b) We should not aim to train interpreters, tourist guides or headwaiters. Our pupils, when they leave school, are not going to be called upon to write French, nor will they have many opportunities of speaking it.

(c) It should not be our aim to have our pupils mistaken for natives. For practical purposes, the first stage to be attained is to get our pupils sufficiently competent to convey their bare essential meaning in the new language. The second and final stage at which we should aim is that at which they can make themselves understood in grammatically correct French (even if not very idiomatic) in a clear and readily intelligible pronunciation. As D.H. Stott says "What matters is not the interpreter-value of the child after we have finished with him, but the breadth of his mind." (10)

(d) We should not aim merely at developing linguistic skills. We should always keep in mind and pursue within the limits imposed by the syllabus and the ability of our pupils, those broad cultural objectives that come from the study of another great civilization, its way of life, literature and history.

Indubitably, language learning is a part of education in the wider sense of the term. It serves as a vehicle of understanding

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(10) STOTT, D.H. LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE NEW EDUCATION

(University of London Press 1946 p.52)

as well as of communication and leads to a more fully developed sense of humanity. The student gains an objective appreciation of a civilization different from his own, and is brought to a clearer realization of the place in the world community of both his own and foreign countries. It is through its language that a nation expresses its conception of the world and passes on what it has to contribute in the way of spiritual values. By studying foreign languages the student expands his knowledge of mankind and his mind becomes opened to other forms of life. The foreign literature introduces him to the questions he will have to face in life and shows him how other men react to them. Not only is an intelligent process of self-education started in the student, he also develops a sense of human solidarity.

We, as teachers, must never lose sight of this cultural aim. How, it may be asked, can this aim be pursued with that majority of pupils not going on to advanced studies? In fact, can it be pursued at all? If not, there is not much point in teaching a foreign language to those who will study it for one, two, or three years at the most.

What we must do is to take our pupils in imagination to the foreign country whose language we are studying. We must visit those towns and cities they hear of in geography. We must make our pupils walk the streets, invite them to enter the houses and sit down as guests at the foreign table. Gradually and systematically we can reveal to them the intimate life of the country and make them acquainted with its particular manners and customs.

Instruction such as this can easily be assimilated into the

general scheme of work. Good modern French Courses, e.g. the Loveman, Niklaus series and Nos Voisins Français help to take the learner into a foreign environment. To take two examples from Nos Voisins Français. Father is bringing a guest home for le déjeuner. The menu is given, the preparation, the arrival of the guest, the sitting down to table and the conversation. At the beginning of the lesson (lesson 10) a description is given of table customs, setting out of the table etc. Lesson 11 gives information about birthdays and fêtes together with a list of likely presents. Then follows, in French, an account of Marie's 'anniversaire'. First you have the family greeting her, then you have a description of her little party. This is given by means of conversation between Mary, her mother, brother and guests. Little scenes and plays dealing with those and similar topics can be acted out in class and added information given when necessary by the teacher.

We are now in a position to offer an aim which, we feel, is not only adequate, but capable of fulfilment in the Australian setting.

All we can surely expect is that the student at the end of his course shall have a sound, accurate knowledge of the spoken and written forms needed to express IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE the EVERY DAY THINGS AND HAPPENINGS which are WITHIN THE FIELD OF HIS EXPERIENCE and be able to read with understanding texts dealing with material AT HIS OWN LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE.

Note the emphasis - the use of simple language to express everyday things and happenings insofar as they lie within the

field of his experience. To expect any more than this is not only unnatural - it is surely doomed to failure.

If the pupil is, at the same time, so equipped as to be able to continue his study either at the University or in the world outside, and if we have never throughout the course lost sight of the cultural aim, then there can be no question at all as to the value of his modern language study. We shall have given him some contact with a living people whose thought and behaviour are an active force in present-day civilization.

Given a reasonable aim, then, how can the conscientious teacher who wants to do the best for his pupils, overcome the problem of motivation? What guidance can he get with regard to method?

Before offering our solution to these problems, we shall first trace the history of methods used in teaching modern languages. Then we shall refer briefly to the history of the direct method in Australia.

## III

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF MODERN-LANGUAGE METHODOLOGY

It is impossible to consider the development of modern-language instruction without referring to its dependence on Latin. Modern-language study was in the first place an offshoot of the study of the Classics, and the methods employed in the teaching of dead languages were imported wholesale into the teaching of living ones. During the Middle Ages and up to about the year 1700 Latin completely dominated the curriculum, and with very good reason.

It was the language of all records, of all official communications, of the courts, church, university instruction and of learned publications - in fact it was the universal medium of thought and communication. It became once more a living language and was adapted to the needs of the times. This meant changes and modifications <sup>in</sup> ~~is~~ usage. New words were added as the need arose and difficult constructions were simplified. Its study in the schools had, therefore, a practical as well as a pedagogical value.

The first aim of grammar school instruction was to provide a pupil with a vocabulary, teach him the ordinary rules of correct usage and to develop in him the ability to write and speak the language. This Medieval Latin was the language of education until the 16th and 17th centuries.

At this time two things began to happen. Firstly, the vernacular languages began to assume importance and secondly, under the influence of humanism, Classical Latin began to displace

Medieval Latin as the subject of instruction. The vocabulary and constructions used by the best classical authors began to be taught. A new aim was added, that of writing Latin with distinction, using only such words as Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Livy used.

This substitution of classical for medieval Latin as the subject of school instruction meant the substitution of a dead for a living language. An ever-increasing regard for classical usage developed. Cicero's works in particular came to be regarded as the only perfect model. This emphasis on style at the expense of matter was a misplaced emphasis. Latin came to be studied as an end in itself. Most of the teaching time was spent on rules of syntax, forms of expression and the technique of construction, while the real value of Latin as an introduction into Roman life, literature and ideas was lost sight of.

"Gerund-grinding became the method; Ciceronianism, the content. Except for occasional experiments in more natural methods, Latin has continued to be taught by the grammar or grammar-translation methods, greatly to its own detriment and to that of the modern foreign languages when they became part of the curriculum." (1)

Instead of opening up the riches of classical culture and applying them in the education of the young, Renaissance educators were preoccupied with formal grammar, its application in written and oral composition, and the construing of authors. Reading

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(1) COLE, ROBERT D. MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND THEIR TEACHING

(D. Appleton & Co. New York, 1931 pp. 49-50)

material was restricted to difficult classical texts. School exercises consisted of exacting drill in word forms, constructions, and literary artifices of style. Language study developed into over-reliance on dictionaries and keys. "Grammar must have been the *bête noire* of the sixteenth century schoolboy. It followed him through the entire course of his school life, if not in the Latin form then in the Greek. It ended up, if it did not in practice so begin, by engrossing almost all the energy and time of pupil and master alike." (2)

Paradigms, rules and exceptions were memorized apart from any text or connected reading. The reading was always intensive, so the amount read or translated was small. Such stress was laid on written composition also that pupils kept special books in which they noted down, as they came across them, all likely turns of style and quotations that might be used to advantage in their own compositions. They were also given exercises in imitation of various authors and in paraphrasing poetical passages. All this preoccupation with the mechanics of language led to over-emphasis of the rules of syntax. "For purposes of drill in formal grammar, exercises were devised, about the beginning of the eighteenth century to illustrate rules and exceptions. Exceptional and rare usages were emphasized more than the common and useful constructions. It is difficult to make sentences prepared for such a purpose connected in content, or even to keep them from being unnatural and absurd. Much of the grammar so learned could in fact only

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(2) REISNER, EDWARD H. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN EDUCATION  
(The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927, p.483)

be applied in such an artificial medium as has been described, or the application was so long deferred that the pupil forgot the principle involved." (3)

This was the method for teaching foreign languages inherited from Latin study. Pronunciation, of course, was quite neglected. It was not without its critics. Montaigne was one of the first and he was followed by Locke. But the method was too deeply entrenched at the time and lasted almost unchallenged until round about 1900.

It has come to be known as the grammar or grammar-translation method. ... "the pupil is first put through a volume of paradigms, rules, exceptions, and examples which he learns by heart. Only when he has thoroughly mastered this book is he allowed to read; and even then his reading is usually regarded as a means of illustrating and emphasizing grammatical principles, rather than as a source of inspiration or of literary education" (4) After a year of this, came the application of this grammatical material studied. Disconnected sentences in the language were intensively studied and dissected to find the rules already taught and emphasis was placed on applying them. Then came English sentences to be translated in which those rules could be applied. Pronunciation was not emphasized and there was no conversation. In most cases the language to the average boy was as lifeless and remote as Latin and Greek. But there was a prestige in studying those languages which was entirely absent from modern language study.

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(3) BUCHANAN & MACPHEE: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MODERN LANGUAGE METHODOLOGY (1928, quoted by Cole, *ibid* p.50)

(4) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF TWELVE (p. 14 Heath & Co. quoted by Cole, *ibid* p.56)



The teacher was usually a foreigner, not always well educated, who often spoke English badly, kept poor discipline and usually taught the class literally nothing. Ian Hay, in his "Lighter Side of School Life" gives an amusing caricature of the French Master you would find in English schools prior to 1900.

"Lastly, Mr. Klotz. Mr. Klotz may be described as a Teutonic survival - a survival of the days when it was de rigueur to have the French language taught by a foreigner of some kind. Not necessarily by a Frenchman - that would have been pandering too slavishly to Continental idiosyncrasy - but at least by someone who could only speak broken English. Mr. Klotz was a Prussian, so possessed all the necessary qualifications." (5) This gentleman, however, was a disciplinarian. But the boys soon found out his weak points and frequently wasted a period by asking him something about the Prussian army "of which he had been a distinguished ornament" and the Battle of Sedan in which "it appeared that he had been personally responsible for the success of the Prussian arms". A most interesting account is given by Atkins and Hutton of a beginner's experience in learning French in England in the 1870's.

"Some time in the 'seventies a small boy took his first French lesson at an excellent preparatory School. He had been taught privately the elements of Latin and Greek and found himself among the first half dozen in the Form order at the end of the first week. In this order the Form took their places for the first French lesson

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(5) IAN HAY - THE LIGHTER SIDE OF SCHOOL LIFE (T.N. Foulis London, Edinburgh, Boston 1914, P.84.)

from Monsieur Henri, the visiting French 'professor'.

Professor: "Who have not learnt French before?" The small boy promptly held up his hand. Professor: "You go straight to the bottom." The professor then turned to those who had learnt French before and some translation was done, with grammar questions. At the end of the lesson the professor turned again to the small boy: "Next time you say by heart avoir and être. The small boy marked the verbs in his book; he could not catch the pronunciation. In due course came preparation for the French lesson; this was supervised by a Classical Master who said he knew no French and allowed no questions. The small boy, who had learnt all the irregular verbs in Latin and all the irregular adjectives in Greek, was not daunted. At the end of prep. he knew most of the forms by sight; he hardly dared to represent the sounds to himself. No one in six years ever explained the French sounds or drilled him in pronunciation. By Classical Masters he was drilled in grammar and translation into English and left to muddle his way through exercises. Then he reached the top set, where the reading of French was practised and corrected; he began to hear the foreign sounds. Next term the scheme compelled him to drop French and start German." (6)

After this, however, there was a gradual displacement of the foreigner in English Schools by an English teacher - the serious teacher who had really learnt some French. He was still under the domination of the Classical methods of teaching, but had a scholar's

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(6) ATKINS AND HUTTON THE TEACHING OF MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

IN SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY (1920 Edward Arnold, London, pp.54-55)

respect for the language. His methods, though, savoured too exclusively of "gerund-grinding" and pupils had to learn the out-of-the-way exceptions in the language.

His method was after all a logical one. It was based on an approach through the vernacular. The native language was taken as a basis and an explanation of the foreign language. Its grammatical data were arranged in a logical sequence and scheme, much of which had to be learnt by heart and used later in painstaking attempts to fit the difficult types of material thus carefully labelled as subject, verb, object, etc. into the framework of the various sentences, every one of which was regarded as a sort of jigsaw puzzle. This method pinned its faith exclusively to the written or printed word. It encouraged its pupils to train their eyes and neglect their ears. (7)

The object of this classical method was reading ability. It implied that a full knowledge of grammar was necessary for reading, ignoring the fact that all children learn to read their mother tongue without knowing much grammar. Hence the undue emphasis on the development of the grammar and a knowledge of unusual exceptions. Its advantages were that it offered a clear cut task to teachers and an easily testable objective.

Although by 1850 French was taught in most secondary schools in England, in those of the greatest prestige, it was an inferior subject - not part of the serious work of the schools. (8)

(7) CLOUDESLEY BRERETON MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN DAY AND EVENING SCHOOLS (1930 University of London Press p.5.)

(8) ADAMSON, J.W. ENGLISH EDUCATION 1789-1902 (Cambridge 1930) p.45.

u Sir Eardley Wilmot's Grammar School Act of 1840 gave legal sanction to the teaching of subjects other than Classics in the endowed Grammar Schools. In most of these schools, however, French teaching was confined to grammar, translation and the reading of seventeenth century authors. (9) Methods of teaching in early modern language study, then, depended on those used in the teaching of Latin and so was preoccupied with form rather than content. There was no emphasis on pronunciation and conversation played no part. Neither was any knowledge of the foreign civilization taught. Spoken French was taught exceptionally at Bristol College and in some private schools, such as the one conducted by the Hill family, where lessons in the highest French class were given in French. (10) Generally speaking, however, no spoken French was taught. A change was bound to come. Spencer began it in his attack on classical education and the methods of teaching employed. He argued that the learner must be considered, that formal discipline was not the correct aim and that an emphasis on the logical rather than the psychological was misplaced. About the same time German psychologists contended that the learner's interest must be aroused and held if he were to profit, and that the student's approach must be analyzed and his probable reaction anticipated and provided for. It seemed natural to assume that the child would learn another language best by the same method used in learning his native tongue. So another method was born, known in its later development as the

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(9) ADAMSON op. cit. p.241

(10) Ibid pp. 50-52

direct method. There are many variations of the direct method, and many names have been applied to methods embodying some or all of its principles - natural, psychological, phonetic, new, reform, direct, analytic, imitative.

First came the natural method. This was a definite reaction against the grammar method. Translation was banished entirely. As the child learnt his own language without learning grammar, grammar was considered useless in this method. The vocabulary of everyday life took the place of the abstractions of books. In its extreme form this method consisted of a series of monologues by the teacher interspersed with exchanges of question and answer between instructor and pupil, all in the foreign language. Naturally a great deal of pantomime accompanied the talk. With the aid of this, by attentive listening, and by dint of much repetition the learner came to associate certain acts and objects with certain combinations of the sound and finally reached the point of reproducing the foreign words or phrases. The scholar was not allowed to see the foreign language in print until considerable familiarity with the spoken word was attained. The study of grammar was reserved for a still later period. Perhaps the best known of those associated with the movement was Berlitz. Others are Heness, Sauveur, Kroeh, van Daell.

Next the psychological method had, in the main, the same underlying philosophy. It rested on the principle of the association of ideas and the habit of mental visualization. It was carefully worked out by Gouin and then popularised by Bétis who together with H. Swan translated Gouin's book 'Art d'enseigner

et d'étudier les langues<sup>1</sup> The translation was published in 1907 by Longmans Green & Co., New York.

The student is supposed to get foreign words in his mind through his impression of actual objects, pictures, gestures, and then attach the foreign word to this image, thus establishing a strong bond between the foreign word and the idea it expresses. Of course, when the meaning of the foreign word cannot be conveyed even by gesture or picture, the vernacular word must be given. Gouin took the words that he considered essential to the student's vocabulary and arranged them in groups centred about such topics as school, home, community life, farm life etc. He then constructed a series of sentences on various phases of these subjects. For example, in the unit on home life is a sequence of sentences based on the action of combing one's hair. "I comb my hair. I approach the dresser. I stretch out my arm. I grasp the comb. I raise it to my head. I draw it through my hair. I look into the mirror. I make a parting in the middle. I lay the comb down. I leave the dresser." Because the sentences were arranged in such series, this plan became known as the "Series System". Most of the series consisted of fifteen to eighteen sentences with supplementary phrases for facilitating the use of the foreign language as the medium of intercourse in the class. Since the series dealt largely with actions, verbs received much emphasis. The teaching was oral, the class learning each series first by hearing and speaking it. The method was as follows. The teacher would announce the theme of the series, laying stress on the verb and conveying the meaning of the words by gesture, pointing to the

object, performing the action in pantomime, or drawing a quick sketch on the blackboard. If there were a word which the class could not understand by any of those means he would say "Ça veut dire en Anglais" and would give the English word. The teacher would watch closely to see that all understood. Then the class would repeat the sentence as a class and, as far as was necessary, individually. There would, of course, be several reviews by the whole class of what had preceded, and of the whole after it had been finished. Homework consisted in writing the series in a notebook with changes of number, person, tense, and of speaking the whole aloud from memory until it had been memorized. (11)

A considerable vocabulary of the objects and actions of everyday life was developed by this method. As a system of memorizing it is excellent. The sequence of actions described in the series, facilitates remembering the actions consecutively and the context facilitates remembering the words. The vocabulary, however, is not what one needs for reading ability. No frequency word lists were used, because none were to be had at the time Gouin wrote. His book, however, after its translation into English, had great influence in England and America and provided much material for subsequent generations of practitioners of the Direct Method. It was, indeed, the foundation of the direct method. But the teaching world did not grasp one important element in his method and that was that sentences are recited AND ACTED OUT at the same time. One half of his method has been neglected. It is not only the spoken language but the action with

(11) This account is based on HANDSCHIN, C.H. MODERN LANGUAGE

TEACHING (Yonkers on Hudson N.Y. World Book Company p.63 et seq)

it that is the secret of learning language. "For everyone uses action to reinforce meaning - gesture with hand, head, eye, arm, shoulder, body - because we feel that it requires this emphasis, and this movement to make the meaning clear to a companion. So when learning a language we ought to use action and gesture to reinforce meaning and intention - it is only natural that we should do so." (12)

It was not strange that a Frenchman should have shown a method for teaching contemporary foreign languages. France had extensive colonies; and was for a time the centre of European culture. It was natural she should be interested in finding an efficient means of communication with foreign peoples. But it was in Germany that changing social and economic conditions began first to influence the curriculum and methods of teaching in secondary schools and cause a strong demand for reform in the teaching of modern languages. Germany had entered the ranks of trading nations last. When she finally entered the markets of the world as a trading nation late in the nineteenth century, she needed linguists who could speak and read fluently. Theoretical knowledge of grammatical rules was of little use to commercial and industrial firms who employed representatives abroad and translators at home.

A new reform movement was launched by Professor Viëtor of the University of Marburg with the publication of his book 'Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren' - 'The teaching of languages must

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be reversed.' This was known as the new, or reform, or phonetic method and in its later development as the direct method.

This new method started from opposite premises to the old. It commenced with the foreign language itself instead of with the mother tongue. It began with the ordinary spoken language and not with the literary written idiom. As it seemed natural to assume that a child would learn another language best by the same method used in learning his native tongue, it followed the natural order in which the child learns to speak more or less instinctively in his own home and in his own country. Pronunciation was the foundation stone here. Viëtor believed that the teacher could only master pronunciation by a close study of phonetics and by a period of residence in the foreign country. The method began with a training of the ear and vocal organs, the students being drilled thoroughly in the vowels and consonants of the new language, considered both as isolated phenomena and as elements of idiomatic phrases. The phrases in turn were combined into dialogues and stories. Printed texts in the phonetic notation were used, ordinary texts were taboo. Objects and pictures were constantly displayed and no effort was spared to familiarise the student with all phases of the life of the country whose language was being studied. Inflections and syntax were studied inductively. Composition consisted first of oral and written reproductions of matter already heard or read, then of combinations of familiar phrases. Systematic grammar and translation came last . (13)

Since language was not made up of isolated words, but of word-groups, the foreign language must be studied in a context and grammar should be simply a means to the end of speaking and reading the language. (14) Viëtor's theories were spread by a review 'Die Neuere Sprachen, ' by vacation courses at Marburg, and by the establishment of the Tilly Institute in Berlin. Tilly, an Australian teacher, had been a student and colleague of Viëtor, and students of foreign language went to his Berlin Institute to study German and phonetics. In Paris, M. Paul Passy became famous as a Professor of Phonetics and a student, Mr. Daniel Jones took the serious study of phonetics to London. Courses at these three centres included reading, conversation, and dictation in the foreign language. (15) After two conferences on Modern Language Teaching held in Vienna in 1898 and Leipzig in 1900 the reform movement was well under way and known in England as the Direct Method.

As we have mentioned before, this Direct Method was based on the theory that it was natural for a child to study a foreign language by hearing and speaking it just as he learnt his mother-tongue in this way. It was believed that the great thing was to speak to the child and get him to speak. It was of small account whether the pupil understood all that was said. Something was sure to stick. It was of still less account, if he made blunder after blunder in accent and in grammar. In fact it raised

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(14.) VERNON MALLINSON, TEACHING A MODERN LANGUAGE Heinemann 1953 p.8

(15.) OLIVE WYKES, Unpublished Thesis, University of Melbourne

extravagant hopes among some teachers that the necessity for grammar drill would disappear.

The method was interpreted in the schools in countless ways by different teachers in different countries.

Some teachers in their eagerness to follow Viëtor's methods in their entirety used no translation at all, but indicated the meaning of new words by direct association, context, drawing, acting. Others applied only selected features of the method and used translation in higher classes for cultivating precision, and in lower forms for difficult words whose meaning would be difficult to show other than by the use of the vernacular.

This method at first roused tremendous enthusiasm, but it had weak points which began to express themselves later in a discouragement of the leaders themselves in 1911. Later on enthusiasm for the Reform Movement, as it was also called, started to wane all over the world. (16) As we shall show in the next chapter, the direct method was tried in Australia and found unsatisfactory.

Mistakes, of course, are inseparable from experiment. At the outset, extravagant hopes were raised and over-conscientious theorists and untrained enthusiasts misapplied the principles of the new method and much valuable time was wasted. It was soon seen, too, that there was NOT a complete parallel between the native child and the foreign child trying to learn another language in a foreign environment. Conditions that obtain for

(16.) MALLINSON (op. cit. pp. 16-19

learning the mother-tongue cannot be reproduced for the learning of a second language. Instead of having all day, every day, to listen and learn the foreign language, the child begins much later in life, and has only a very limited number of years to listen to and learn the new language.

Various objections were raised against this method.

(1) Where the Direct Method was tried in its entirety it was not successful. K.S. Guthrie <sup>(17)</sup> cites the case of France. Prime Minister Luys decreed that after a certain date, the whole instruction should be given in the foreign language. The decree was found unworkable. Guthrie raises other objections:-

(2) This method not only ignored but proceeded in direct contradiction of the principle that one should proceed from the known to the unknown. He avers "If any method of teaching modern languages is to survive, it must consist of the application of these principles to the field of modern languages." <sup>(18)</sup>

(3) It was unpatriotic, because it advocated the immersion of the child in the new language and its cultural associations to an extent such as if it were a native of the foreign country.

His point is that the centre of interest must be the home and that the object is not, for example, to produce American foreigners, but foreign speaking Americans. As the child would at most spend only one hour a day at the new language, this argument does not seem valid.

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(17.) GUTHRIE, K.S. THE MOTHER-TONGUE METHOD OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES (Comparative Literature Press, Brooklyn, 1912 p.8)

(18.) GUTHRIE op. cit. p.4

(4.) There was no reasoning involved. The pupil was forced to do too much guessing.

(5) It was too slow. The literary side, which is the noblest inheritance of the past, the cumulative culture of a people, which gives the student a new ideal of life, was entirely ignored in as much as the student simply never reached to its study.

(6) It was unfavourable to the self-activity of the pupil. Plans of written homework have, on the Reform Method, been difficult to invent; and practically, there has been none.

(7) In the case of the pupils' sickness there was no method to catch up with what had been missed. (19) Finally (8) it was held that however bright and attractive the Direct Method might be as a beginning, it tended to exhaust its resources in the second and third years. This lead H.S.Mayall to advocate a method of conducting dramatic work as a follow-on of the Direct Method (20).

The reasons for the failure of the Direct Method were these:-

(1) Teachers were not trained to use the method.

(2) The courses were too short for its effective functioning.

A serious fault was the time teachers took to finish the ordinary instruction on direct lines. They forgot that time was the essence of their contract with their pupils to teach them French.

(3) There were not enough direct-method text books.

(4) Exam. papers were set on the basis of a grammar-translation

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(19) GUTHRIE op. cit. p.8

(20) MAYALL, H.S. FIVE FRENCH FARCES FOR THE IVTH FORM ROOM

(Macmillan)

method.

(5) The spoken language is much more difficult to learn than the written language.

(6) The teaching of some grammar was necessary even if it were regarded merely as a remedial device for explaining to the pupils the why and wherefore of their errors in composition.

(7) The early wild enthusiasm was not tempered to the actual conditions obtaining in the schools nor to the abilities of the average teacher. No attempt was made to integrate the new teaching with the culture patterns of the different peoples of the various countries.

"Gradually the method fell into ill-favour as it became obvious that, despite all the effort expended, only mediocre success at the best could be obtained from the average form. As pupils floundered closer and closer to the School Certificate and Matriculation Exams, with no clear grasp of the language they were supposed to be studying, reversion to the old grammar-grind tactics and to the Plötz approach seemed imperative." (21)

This meant that inexperienced or ill-equipped teachers were left floundering, returning for self-protection to the old translational method.

Although the Direct Method as first advocated failed to fulfill its promise, it was a historically useful reaction against the old-time dead-language technique of the past where the teacher

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(21) MALLINSON op. cit. p.17

himself often could not speak the language he was teaching.<sup>(22)</sup>

Moreover it had many good points which have left lasting results.

It left an early, immediate touch with the foreign language;

more elasticity in its presentation; a lively co-operation of

the class and much more pupil participation in the lesson.

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(22) GUTHRIE op. cit. p.8

It was too good a method to lose. "One does not want to spend too much time quarrelling about labels, but what I contend is that of the sum total of methods employed to-day in an ordinary school, the majority are certainly complete or partial applications of the Direct Method and we may as well give credit where credit is due." (23)

So a second stage was reached in which the need of a system became evident - system in the acquisition of accent, in the acquisition of grammar and in teaching generally. First the teaching of accent was systematised. Secondly, it was realised that drill in grammar was equally imperative, not in formal grammar pure and simple, but in grammar taught inductively and then reduced to a system. If the sentence were rightly taken as the linguistic unit, one must none the less break it up if the pupil is to understand it. Reading and free composition had already been substituted for translation out of or into the foreign tongue, translation as such being relegated to a late stage and translation into the foreign tongue still later. The aims now were to teach the child to express himself with a correct accent and in correct language, to use the spoken language as a transition to the written, to use it again as a means of explaining the reading while giving him some knowledge of the people and their country. Efforts were made to impress on the child that the language is a living thing dealing with real things and real people, instead of treating it as a mere mass of grammatical data including every possible exception and irregularity. It was



recognised that there was need for more systematic teaching to prevent waste of time and to guard the learner against error. This need became still more evident when it was realised that even the foreigner has need to learn to write his own tongue grammatically. There was therefore need to employ many of the old orthodox methods, especially when the pupil passed on to the more advanced literary style.

At the same time, experience had forced on the teacher the need of adequate equipment of the teacher himself, of co-ordination in methods throughout the school, of co-ordination of the work of one class with that of the others, and this implied a co-ordination of text books. The revised objectives of the new method have been summed up by Harold E. Palmer:-

- (a) To promote the rational and systematic study of pronunciation by means of phonetic theory and transcription.
- (b) To promote the idea that a language is used primarily as a means of communicating thoughts.
- (c) To promote the idea that foreign languages should be learned by methods approximating to those by which we learn our native tongue. (24)

As we have pointed out before, many teachers had banned 'translation.' They imagined it to be the root of the evil in language teaching. There must be no bilingualism - the mother-tongue must be excluded from the course and the lessons conducted

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(24) PALMER, HAROLD E. THE PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE -STUDY (Harrap & Co. Ltd. London, 1921 p. 180)

in the foreign language. But the evil, as Palmer points out, lay in the exaggerated attention which had been paid to grammatical construction. Those who still used the mother-tongue as a vehicular language, proceed naturally enough from the known to the unknown. (25) Palmer himself advocated an oral approach as a substitute for the Direct Method. His problem was to teach English as a foreign language to the Japanese. He laid special stress on purely oral training. He also laid great emphasis on memorising and habit-forming. He stressed what he called the process of "conscious assimilation" and devised a whole series of "substitution exercises" the more readily to facilitate this process. (26) The Clarendon French Course (O.U.P.) bases most of its exercises on the Palmer substitution method.

The interest aroused in modern language teaching did not cease with the growing disillusionment with the hundred per cent direct method. A shift of emphasis occurred. This time the stress was on reading. No longer was "direct method" the only watchword. "Intensive" and "extensive reading" were particular formulas by which teachers sought to lead their students to achievement. Attempts were made to select and control vocabulary and mention must be made of the importance of Vander Beke's word book for a French word count first published in 1929.

The American Council on Education appointed in 1928 the Committee on Modern Language Teaching. The purpose of this

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(25) Ibid. p. 181

(26) PALMER, H.E. THE ORAL METHOD OF TEACHING LANGUAGES  
(Heffer 1921)

Committee was to stimulate experiments and studies in important aspects of modern-language teaching and to examine generally tendencies and progress in this field. The Committee drew up a report known as the Coleman Report which was published in 1929 under the title "The Teaching of Modern Languages in the United States". One of the tendencies in modern-language teaching which inspired their report was the pioneer work of Michael West at Dacca. His work which was a reading approach grew out of an attempt to solve the problem of teaching Bengali students in the short space of two or three years, to read English books of informative value. His work also prompted Gurney and Scott in England to evolve their own series of "Oxford Rapid-Reading Texts" based on a carefully balanced word count and word frequency chart. To return to the Coleman Report. This report asserts:-

"Experience and statistical evidence in teaching the vernacular indicate that the amount of reading that pupils do is directly related to achievement both in rate of silent reading and in comprehension. Furthermore, experiments show conclusively that increasing the amount of reading that is required results in rapid progress in rate and comprehension. Experimental data in the modern-language field warrant the hypothesis that there is a close correspondence between limited reading experience and the poor attainment in reading by large numbers of second and third year students as attainment is evaluated by the American Council

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reading tests and by teacher opinion. It is fair to assume that if, as a result of a shift of emphasis, the amount of reading were considerably increased in modern-language classes, there would result more rapid growth in rate and in comprehension, as has been clearly demonstrated in the case of classes in the vernacular." (27)

The attainment of the reading objective was assumed to be the most important outcome of modern-language teaching. In 1934 we have Cole stating that the prime requisite was to extend as rapidly as possible the student's ability to comprehend the thought contained in the printed page. (28)

Reading was thus emphasised at the expense of other sections of the work and a reading method was developed. This prepared the way for a whole series of "reading approaches" to the learning of a foreign language.

A period of enthusiasm for graded texts and word lists ensued. We have mentioned the Vander Beke word count and the Oxford Rapid Readers. There were also the Graded French Readers edited by Bond of the University of Chicago and A New French Reader edited by Ford and Hicks (J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd.). These can still be used most effectively to get children to read outside of the classroom.

There was now a swing away from the more direct oral approach on the part of those caught up in this new enthusiasm. But there have always been teachers using a more or less directly

(27) THE TEACHING OF MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE UNITED STATES  
(Macmillan Co. 1929 p.170)

(28) COLE: EXPERIMENTS AND STUDIES IN MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING  
(Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois 1934 p.4)

oral approach and the advantages of this method have never been lost sight of. Before we go on to consider present-day tendencies, it seems opportune here to clarify our terminology. We have mentioned the various names given in the past to those methods embodying some or all of the principles of the direct method. All such methods are now in Europe classed as the active method and in America bear the term aural-oral approach. We shall continue to use the historical term 'direct method' when referring to British and Australian developments, and 'aural-oral' when specific mention is made of American tendencies.

Strangely enough, though the shortcomings of the grammar method are universally denounced, this method is by no means dead. It even seems in many cases to be gaining the ascendancy.

We have mentioned the swing away from teaching the entire subject, grammar and all in the foreign language on the most direct of lines. We have also pointed out that when the hundred per cent direct method was found unsatisfactory bewildered teachers went back to a completely indirect method of translation and grammar and a complete exclusion of oral work. There are many to-day who still use this method and the only oral work given is that which is required by the Universities in the public examinations - dictation, reading and, in some cases, conversation. Old formal grammars are still popular. This in spite of some excellent books dealing with every day happenings and such modern achievements as wireless and television - things in which the child himself is interested. I refer specifically to *Nos Voisins*

Français (Tomlinson) and the Loveman-Niklaus series.

What are the main trends in Modern language teaching to-day?

We recognise four.

- (1) A return to the old grammar-translation method.
- (2) The use of the "eclectic" method i.e. the selection of the best features of all methods and their use systematically to attain the desired aims.
- (3) The mainly direct approach
- (4) The use of modern technical devices in a distinctly aural-oral approach.

(1) "It would be difficult to say exactly how many of those methods that have been condemned by language-teaching experts are still in common use. There can be no doubt that many are used in schools, and widely too, as anyone with first-hand knowledge will know, but the facts are not normally made public or freely discussed. Also there appear to be few attempts in some countries either to discover and examine the exact state of language teaching in their schools, or to remedy an unsatisfactory situation if one exists. The reports that have been furnished by knowledgeable persons in authority made statements such as the following: 'the old-fashioned methods of drill in formal grammar are widely in use;' 'formal grammar and translation are the popular methods;' 'the text book plays the tune and pupils and teacher dance to it;' 'a complete shift from the direct method to the grammatical method takes place in the secondary school; ..... 'formal grammar is much beloved of the older generation of teachers' .....

Statements such as these as to the prevalence of old-fashioned

methods are disheartening" (29)

(2) Those using this method are not content with teaching mere conversational ability and endeavour not to lose sight of the humanistic values in the traditional teaching of modern languages. So they align themselves with the development which includes the active method, which they use as much as possible, but do not hesitate to take what is best from the traditional methods in which general cultural goals have been given paramount importance.

(3) In 1953, an International Seminar organised by the Secretariat of Unesco was held in Ceylon, on "The Contribution of the Teaching of Modern Languages towards Education for Living in a World Community." Over a period of four weeks, participants from eighteen countries came to grips with many of the pedagogical aspects of the problem of the most effective teaching of languages of wide communication. While there was no support of any one method, there was agreement on a general set of principles and these principles are stated in the seminar report. This report compresses into a relatively small compass almost all the essential aspects of present day theory on the subject. Moreover it was assented to by an international group whose members had widely different backgrounds and attitudes. These general principles were:-

- (1) The approach should be primarily oral.
- (2) Active methods of teaching should be used as far as possible .

(3) The greatest possible use of the foreign tongue should be made in the classroom.

(4) The difficulties of the foreign tongue in the matter of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar should be carefully graded for presentation.

(5) The teaching of a language should be considered more as the imparting of a skill than as the provision of information about the forms of the language. (30)

It is interesting to observe this international advocacy of a primarily oral approach. The report further adds that the acquisition of a basic vocabulary can be greatly assisted by the memorization of songs, rhymes and easy pieces of poetry. It is interesting to observe that no mention is made of plays in this regard.

It follows from this report that many of the best teachers of all nations agree on a mainly - though not one hundred per cent - oral approach. In the foreword to a new French Course based on modern methods the authors state: "It does not follow the hundred per cent direct method - the time allowed for French in most Grammar Schools and the size of the classes render that method impracticable - but we choose to call it a 'Modern Method Course' because French is the medium for both teacher and pupil whenever possible and because we are convinced that the best way to learn a foreign language is TO USE IT, listening to it and speaking it from the first lesson." (31)

(30) UNESCO op. cit. p.50

(31) Crampton & Loveman MODERN METHOD FRENCH COURSE Book I  
Thos. Nelson & Sons Ltd.) 1955.



In an interesting little study of modern language teaching in Tasmania, 1961, J.A. Hunt finds that "There is an ever-growing uniformity of method in modern language teaching in the State, (32) so that a MODIFIED FORM OF DIRECT APPROACH IS NEARLY UNIVERSAL" (Emphasis mine).

There are, then, many teachers of all nations following the direct method, but it is a modified direct and not the hundred per cent direct method advocated by Viëtor and his followers.

(4) On April 13th and 14th, 1961, the Ministers of Education of the 16 signatory nations (including the Netherlands) to the European Cultural Convention, held a conference at Hamburg. They issued a statement which contained the following:

....."it is clear that the upheavals of modern times throughout the world impose upon all European nations the same crucial problems of adapting education. These problems can be resolved only with the full assistance of the educationalists themselves, whose thinking must be directed towards the future by the modernization of organizational structures in the reform of teaching methods. In tackling these problems which are common to them all, and upon the solution of which the role of Europe in the world of the late 20th Century depends, the Ministers agreed to take the utmost advantage of their mutual experience in the hope that the reforms they adopt will gradually merge into methods and European co-operation leading to better understanding". (33)

(32) J.A. HUNT MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN TASMANIA 1961

(Babel No. 20 July 1962)

(33) Le Courrier Australien, May 26th 1961.

Among the subjects discussed was opportunities for more children to learn a foreign language, especially by RAPID ORAL METHODS INVOLVING THE USE OF MODERN, AUDIO-VISUAL APPARATUS. (34)  
(Emphasis mine).

Two nations particularly are using rapid oral methods involving modern audio-visual apparatus to teach children foreign languages - France and the U.S.A. As the Ministers in Europe were committed to adopt reforms suggested at the Conference, more of these methods will be used especially as funds are made available.

In the magazine "La France" March 29th, 1961 (School edition) mention is made and a photo shown of children listening to and watching on television an Italian lesson between a teacher and four pupils who converse in an adjoining room. The school is the lycée de Sèvres (Seine-et-Oise). This was started as an experiment and was stated in the magazine to be giving excellent results.

In "La France", October 4th, 1961, illustrations were given of a language laboratory. The teacher uses her microphone to dictate phrases which can be heard by the students through headphones. The students can repeat the passages independently on to small tape recorders and so hear their own efforts and correct and compare them with the original. Students can also record passages on the master tape recorder in the control booth and this can be corrected by the teacher.

In the U.S.A, especially since the passing in 1958 of the National Defence Education Act, language Laboratories are being  
(34) Ibid.

set up in many high schools and colleges. These language laboratories are special classrooms which can be converted into laboratories in a few minutes. Certain class rooms are equipped with individual desk-tables which can, by means of a few simple mechanisms controlled by the children, be converted into booths complete with earphones for the reception of sound and a tape for the recording of childrens voices. Texts are being produced suitable for classes taught by audio-lingual methods. Beautiful films of the foreign country, complete with sound track are accompanied by tapes of native voices which contain pronunciation exercises, drill in grammatical structures and practice in the new vocabulary. Olive Wykes describes one of these classes she saw on a recent trip to the U.S.A. "The children had been studying a text, and proceeded to repeat, after the voice of the recorded native speaker, vocabulary phrases and grammatical structures, and to answer questions on the text. The class teacher could tune in to any booth and assist individual difficulties and the children played back their own recordings at the end of the session. It is estimated that within five years all high schools having an enrolment of 600 or more students will be equipped with adequate language laboratories."(35)

Few countries to-day could afford to equip many of their schools with language laboratories of the kind described by Miss Wykes, but more and more use is being, and will continue to be, made of audio-visual apparatus. The Americans are also trying

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(35) OLIVE WYKES MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE UNITED STATES

an experiment in teaching from a flying television station directed from Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana. It is called the Mid West Airborne Television Programme. The plane is a DC6 whose normal seating accommodation is replaced by a tightly packed array of electronic equipment. It flies at a height of 23,000 feet enabling a coverage with a radius of 200 miles and beams video-taped T.V. courses to six States in the American mid-west. The courses selected last year included Spanish and French. (36)

As we shall show presently, language laboratories are now being manufactured in Australia. The language laboratory, used as a teaching procedure, will become more and more wide-spread as the years advance. It is fitting, therefore, to consider here the role of the language laboratory.

The development of magnetic tape makes possible the permanent record of speech, and adaptation of electronic devices makes the use of this invention possible for the mass instruction of students. It has been found in U.S.A. that foreign languages can be learned faster and are being learned better by using these new tools in the classroom. It must not be thought, however, that the tape recorder will replace the teacher any more than does the textbook. But the multiple use of tape recorders and other electronic equipment in a teacher-controlled situation in a language laboratory, make it possible to teach pupils to speak and to understand spoken and written language more easily and

done without interrupting the work of the rest of the class.

## (2) The Student Station

While all students are visible to the teacher, they are isolated from each other in sound-proof booths. Each station contains a set of headphones and a microphone as a minimum requirement. There are three principle approaches to student learning in the Rheem Califone language laboratories.

### (a) "Vocale" (or Listening-Responding)

The student works on material heard through his headphones and read from his textbooks. When he responds into his microphone he hears his own voice through his headphones. The teacher may also listen to the lesson and student's response, and if he so wishes, this may also be recorded at the Teacher's console.

### (b) "Simplex" (or Listening-Responding-Recording)

This student station is equipped with a full enclosed tamper proof tape deck with only two controls for the student to operate. A signal flashes to alert the student when the end of the tape approaches and the mechanism stops automatically when the end is reached. The tape is permanently anchored to two reels and a clutch mechanism prevents breakage. The student simply has to work his rewind lever to run the tape back to its beginning. No re-threading of tapes or tape handling of any kind is required. In a "Simplex" booth, a student listens through his headphone to a master tape recording from the Teacher's Console, responds into his microphone, hearing himself instantaneously. He records the "master" voice and his own voice on the Rheem Califone

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Simplex Recorder. By rewinding and playing back he can compare the model speech and his own imitation of it. The tape is automatically erased when re-recording takes place.

(c) "Duplex" (or Independent Listening-Responding-Recording) This student station is equipped with a binaural tape recorder. This allows a student to use a master tape on his individual recorder and he is the only one working this 'master' lesson. The student takes into his booth a tape containing a pre-recorded lesson on one track and records his response on the other track. This permits operation independent of the centrally controlled system or allows students to revise in their own time by drawing tapes from a library. The student cannot erase the master lesson because the Duplex plays only the upper track but records and plays back on the lower track. Master tapes are removable and are not concealed on the Duplex. The student may also listen and respond to a master tape or recording from the Teacher's Console in the same manner as with the Simplex. At all times the teacher can monitor his operations and offer correction or instruction.

A library of binaural programmed tapes in many lessons is available from U.S.A. These are of value only in offering practice material. But they provide a sample, or basis, from which teachers can prepare their own lesson tapes.

Many disc recordings are available from Australian Universities. This material could be placed on tape and would ensure greater permanence and ease of duplication. The only drawback is the

cost. If a school council were to purchase a language laboratory to accommodate fifteen students, in the first instance, with the possibility of later extension, the total installed cost would be £3,060.

Another teaching technique still in the stages of experimentation, but one which seems likely to influence methods of teaching is known as "programme instruction". Its largest test began in Roanoke, Virginia, U.S.A. in 1960. In that year 34 eighth-grade pupils finished a year's ninth-grade algebra in half a year with no homework. They were then tested at ninth-grade level. The results were so good that experiments and tests continued. Since then, a majority of the 2000 junior-high and high-school students taking at least one class, in either mathematics or languages conducted under this new teaching method have consistently outperformed those taught by conventional methods. This method is linked with 'teaching machines.'

The student is given information in small doses - only a sentence or a short paragraph at a time. The information is arranged in logical order, each step, or "frame", building on those that come before. The steps become more difficult so gradually that the student is hardly aware of it. This arrangement is called a "program." Each frame contains a space where the student is to write in a word, or answer. After doing this, he immediately checks to see whether it is right or wrong. Most "programs" are written and pre-tested to ensure that almost all students will get about 95% of the answers right. This gives pleasure to the students and, according to its advocates, leads

students to learn faster and remember longer. The 'program' (on paper or microfilm) may be loaded into a teaching machine about the size of a portable record player. The student turns a knob to bring each frame into view and pulls a lever when he wants to uncover the correct answer. The idea behind this method seems to be that of ensuring that every child understands every step along the way, that he proceeds at his own rate, in small steps, responding at every step and knowing immediately that he is right. This method appears likely to stay in America and will probably spread to other countries if its results remain startling. Teaching-machine companies have sprung up in U.S.A. and educators have been called in to write the material. This has led to an interesting result. Teachers discovered that they had much to learn about the learning process - they were forced to take a beginner's point of view. Also, through pre-testing, they could measure the effectiveness of their teaching at every step along the way. (37)

Before concluding this section on modern language methodology we must mention another approach advocated by Professor Robert L. Politzer of the University of Michigan. His aim is to show how to teach French on the basis of linguistic knowledge - and so may be termed the 'linguistic' approach. His method emphasises the pattern conflicts between French and English and shows the remedies which a "linguistic" teaching method can offer.

"Practically all mistakes made by a learner of a foreign

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(37) READER'S DIGEST, DECEMBER 1962 "PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTION."



language are due to one simple and comprehensible failure; the learner mistakenly equates building stones of the foreign system with individual building stones of his system. He wants to use the foreign building stones as if they had been taken from his own set." (38) He admits that

Mon	ami	est	intelligent
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corresponds very nicely to

My	friend	is	intelligent
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but claims that it is also indirectly responsible for such an impossible construction as, for example,

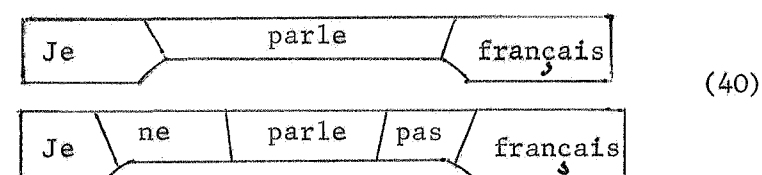
Mon	soeur	est	soif
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He emphasises the fact that the fundamental lesson every language student has to learn is simply that elements of one language cannot be equated with those of another language. "In a "linguistic" teaching approach the construction in the foreign language is the starting point of instruction. The student learns how the construction is made up by exercises in which building stones are replaced by others. This shows him how the construction fits together and what the value of each building stone is. In a sentence like

Je	veux	que	vous	appreniez	le	français
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we show the student how 'français' can be replaced by grec, latin etc., apprenez by étudiez, sachez, comprenez, etc., veux by exige, doute, etc. This teaches the student not only the fact that the building stones apprenez, sachez etc., or veux, exige, belong to the same category since they can fit into the same spot of the construction, but it teaches also the construction, the "pattern" itself. (39)

Another approach to the teaching of the use of a building stone is the comparison of two patterns which differ only through the building stone or stones the student is supposed to learn. The comparison shows exactly how the new building stone fits into the pattern:



In this approach the 'direct method' is not considered contradictory but is incompatible with it in many cases. In this linguistic approach (1) The starting point of any grammatical exercise is a complete construction in the foreign language.

(2) Special emphasis must be put on those elements of the foreign language which are made especially difficult by the interference coming from the native language.

(3) The actual learning of the foreign language takes place primarily by performance and habit-formation on the part of the student

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(39) Ibid p.7.

(40) " " "

(4) Rules and grammatical explanation serve the purpose of describing to the student what he is doing and not of prescribing what he ought to do: constructions in the foreign language must be learned as a whole rather than assembled.

(5) The presentation of teaching materials and the sequence of presentation are dictated by linguistic structure. New building stones of the foreign language are learned one by one.

To conclude this section we must make brief mention of researches that will have a great influence on future modern language teaching. Work is being done by the Institute of Education of the University of London, and the English language Institutes of the Universities of Michigan, Cornell and Georgetown on the theory and technique of teaching English as a foreign language. Questions such as these are engaging the attention of linguistic experts - What is to be taught? What words? What phrases? What sentences? What intonation patterns? How are they to be taught? How are they to be practised, revised in the classroom, revised in supplementary reading?

With the development of linguistic science and its application to the class room, a set of principles will eventually be formulated which, while linguistically sound, will be able to be applied to a problem of method.

BRIEF SURVEY OF METHODS OF TEACHING FRENCH IN NEW SOUTH WALES  
AND VICTORIA

In early colonial days French was chosen as the foreign language to be taught in Australian Schools and the history of French teaching is largely the history of the influence of men like MacCallum, Morris, Waterhouse, Maurice-Carton, Nicholson and Chisholm.

At first it was taught as a dead language like Latin or Greek and we do not hear of any oral teaching until the early eighteen eighties. At the Hurlstone Training School for women teachers in N.S.W. a Frenchwoman came in twice a week to give dictation and reading. (1)

When Professor MacCallum came to the University of Sydney he raised the standards of French at the University but did not encourage conversational methods. He believed that students who wanted a knowledge of a 'colloquial or mercantile kind' (2) should go to a private tutor.

Between 1886-1902 French flourished as the hand-maiden of English. This resulted in a humanizing of French studies which in turn influenced the work of the schools. The highly formal linguistic treatment of the subject gave place to an appreciation of content and style through an understanding of the Language. (3) But no independent philosophy or method of teaching modern languages had evolved in the colony.

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(1) OLIVE WYKES: THE TEACHING OF FRENCH IN N.S.W. & VICTORIA  
(1850-1958) (unpublished M.ED thesis Univ. of Melbourne,  
1958) p.18.

(2) Ibid P.24

(3) Ibid p.34

The time was now ripe in N.S.W. for a reform in the teaching of modern languages. This was largely due to the fact that two men soon to influence modern language instruction had been studying and travelling overseas. Mr. G.G. Nicholson proceeded to Oxford and to the Institut Phonétique in Paris to study under Passy. In 1903 he returned to Sydney to become Assistant Lecturer in Modern literature. Mr. E.G. Waterhouse returned in 1908 after studying under Tilly and Passy and passing Viétor's phonetic examination to part time lecturing in French and German at the University. A.R. Chisholm also stayed at Tilly's Berlin Institute. (4)

Nicholson believed that every teacher should be trained in phonetics and published a book on the subject. His stress on direct method procedures was misleading in that he sought an addition of method. He was determined to retain the grammatical accuracy of the traditional method. He merely added oral work to it.

At the Sydney Teachers' College, T.T. Roberts, who lectured there on French and Method of French until 1912 suggested a method suitable for Australian schools. He advocated for beginners a short preliminary course in sounds, and the maximum use of the foreign language by means of dictation, songs, poems, lessons on objects, pictures and maps. In senior forms, texts should not always be translated but comprehended directly by means of definition, association, gesture and context. Roberts (4) CHISHOLM: MEN ARE MY MILESTONES (Melbourne, 1958 Chap. 2.6)

planned his lectures with a view to producing teachers capable of teaching according to the new methods. (5)

Waterhouse, Roberts' successor developed an intensive course for teachers of modern languages. Five experimental classes were conducted at North Sydney Boys' and Sydney Girls' High Schools by the class teachers in consultation with Waterhouse. These classes were observed and sometimes taken by students. Two hand-books for teachers were later published giving the series of lessons given to first year classes. (6) The children had no text books but compiled their own vocabulary notebook during lessons. The phonetic script only was used for 120 lessons. A typical lesson consisted of careful drill in a new sound, with the children watching their lips and tongue in a mirror, revision of another sound, oral presentation and practice of a new construction such as the verb 'être', the entering of the new construction in phonetic script in the vocabulary book, revision of a set of vocabulary such as the days of the week, and oral practice on the date. After the children had acquired good speech habits, 36 lessons were devoted to the transition from phonetic to ordinary script.

Secondary school children were now being taught by two different methods. Some were taught by the direct method advocated by the Teachers' College, and others by the traditional method influenced to varying degrees by some features of the

(5) WYKES op. cit. p.47

(6) SNOWDON & WATERHOUSE: THE INITIAL STAGE IN FRENCH BY THE DIRECT METHOD (Sydney 1917) and THE INITIAL STAGE IN FRENCH BY THE DIRECT METHOD PART II (Sydney 1918)

direct method. Changes were made in the Intermediate and Leaving French papers to cater for both groups of students.

After 1916 the examiners' reports expressed disappointment at the poor direct method papers submitted. They believed that many ill-equipped teachers were trying to use the newer method, with disastrous results, and advised the schools to give up the direct method until they could attract a staff of specially qualified teachers. (7) Enthusiasm for the Reform Movement was waning all over the world (8) and teachers in Australia now began to concentrate on the reading of French and were not prepared to spend time on acquiring an exact pronunciation. Although they have an oral examination in N.S.W., their public exam-papers encourage a linguistic study of French.

French was not taught at the University of Melbourne until 1884, when the Chair of Modern Languages and Literatures was established. Professor E.E. Morris was appointed to the chair. He believed that it was better to learn a language by reading its leading masterpieces than by a lengthy study of its grammatical rules. He did not believe it was the task of the University to teach languages from the point of view of their practical usefulness in commerce and travel. (9)

In 1905 Monsieur Maurice-Carton was appointed full-time Lecturer in French and the subject soon became very popular.

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(7) OLIVE WYKES op. cit. p.56

(8) VERNON MALLINSON: 'TEACHING A MODERN LANGUAGE' (Heinemann 1953 pp. 16-19)

(9) OLIVE WYKES op. cit p. 121

He was a native speaker and an ardent advocate of the direct method. Oral work played an important part in all three years of the course. (10) In the first year oral work was begun with a detailed study of phonetics. After this, reading, conversation and dictation formed part of the syllabus each year. All lectures on French literature, history and life were delivered in French.

There now began a period of enthusiasm for the direct method with Maurice-Carton as its chief exponent. Oral exams for schools were now started. But in Victoria as elsewhere the direct method did not accomplish all that had been expected from it. Teachers went to extremes and neglected grammar altogether. Maurice-Carton ascribed the dominant reason for the failure not to the direct method but to its faulty application. (11)

Chisholm succeeded Maurice-Carton in 1920. Chisholm believed that language, by providing a gateway to another world and enabling an intimate comprehension of thought, allowed men to take on a new growth, which was the basic process of culture. (12) He believed that the foreign language should be known thoroughly and as a living language. At the University Phonetics was studied thoroughly during the first year with the aid of Chisholm's own book "Manual of French Pronunciation" Sydney 1923. Students were encouraged to speak French right from the start.

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(10) <sup>A</sup> Ibid. p. 127

(11) OLIVE WYKES (op. cit. p.141)

(12) CIRCULAR TO SCHOOLS Victoria March 1949



A lead in the method of teaching modern languages was given by W.H. Frederick when he was appointed Lecturer in Method of Modern Languages, School of Education, 1931. He used a modified direct method - obeying of commands, question and answer, singing, playing and acting. English was used in grammar lessons. He also stressed the reading aim. He thought that the ability to read foreign languages was the most important skill for Australian children. He therefore advocated rapid reading by means of texts adapted by the method of vocabulary limitation and sets of easy readers, magazines and comic strips.

Oral exams are continued in Victoria side by side with the written paper, and the very popular Alliance Competitions have an important influence on the teaching of oral French in that State.

In this brief survey, it is interesting to note that the direct method tried out in both States was a failure. Also, no one can agree on one special method for teaching French. French is studied as a written language with a greater or less emphasis on oral work according to the aims and ideas of the particular school or teacher.

V (a)INTRODUCTION TO METHODS ADVOCATED

Many writers have advocated oral methods. What guidance could an inexperienced teacher, or one wishing to try out new methods, get from a study of these?

In the Melbourne Public Library one can see upon demand an account of the spoken French taught at Bristol College in the last half of the nineteenth century. But this is a purely local method and would not fit into any Australian syllabus. He would also be able to see in the same library "A guide for the Teaching of French in the Elementary Schools and Public Schools of the District of Columbia" by Carl F. Hansen, Washington, D.C. 1952.

From this account he could get some useful hints on using French in incidental directions to the class during the day (e.g. *entrez, allez à votre place, montrez-moi* etc) and in using pictures for vocabulary. Examples - Teacher: *C'est un petit chien.* Children repeat. Teacher: *Qu'est-ce que c'est?* Children: *C'est un petit chien.* This was also applied to class room objects.

Hints like these are useful, but the Australian teacher could not fit them all into an Australian setting and they do not go far enough to be a permanent guide.

E. Creach Kittson in his book 'Language Teaching' advocates an oral approach together with traditional methods. He gives some useful examples on similar lines to the previous book discussed but does not go sufficiently far to act as a permanent reference for the inexperienced teacher.

Jespersen also advocates oral teaching and gives examples of questions that could be asked in class.

H.E. Palmer in "The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages" Chap. V (pp 138-225) under the heading "An ideal standard programme" advocates much the same sort of things discussed above. He suggests a standard programme at the elementary stage of at least one term's duration. But he does not relate it to any particular syllabus of work, nor does he get individual children to come out and do things.

Vernon Mallinson gives some useful hints in his 'Teaching a Modern Language'. He advises that when learning a new verb it is important never to teach it in isolation, but to see that it is closely related to the pupil's experience in a meaningful sentence or phrase, e.g.

A la maison je lis un roman policier

A la maison tu lis un journal illustré

A la maison il lit le 'Daily Mail' (p 77)

He also advocates the learning of little things like

Dix petits nègres

Dix petits nègres

Assis sur le mur

Dix petits nègres assis sur le mur!

Si l'un des nègres tombe du mur -

Il y a neuf petits nègres

Assis sur le mur. etc.

Stott in 'Language Teaching in the New Education' advocates

the use of oral methods. He gives few examples of procedure and while advocating the use of plays, does not mention any suitable ones.

The trouble with all writers advocating oral methods is that they do not give sufficient guidance to the enquirer. They also overlook the fact that action was an important element in Gouin's method and do not advocate the acting out of sentences as they are spoken.

In the following methods advocated we have given procedures in full, have shown what we have found useful, and how to incorporate them into class work no matter what syllabus of work is required. We have shown where to obtain plays, songs, records, etc.

Not only have we tried to give a full account, but have offered many different approaches to oral work. Anyone so desiring could select those parts which would suit him best and experiment with them himself.

We do not offer an infallible method. We know that good language teaching will persist as long as we have good, efficient, successful teachers. We offer it because we are convinced that it solves the problems confronting modern language teaching to-day.

(b)

METHODS ADVOCATEDORAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASS ROOM

"Puisque l'objet essentiel de toute méthode est de maintenir toujours les élèves en action en leur faisant utiliser leurs connaissances, tant par écrit qu'oralement, pour aboutir à une possession réelle, à une spontanéité effective, voyons comment il est possible d'introduire le principe actif dans les cours de langues vivantes ....

Comment exciter l'effort personnel de l'élève? Comment stimuler son initiative? Comment faire appel à sa collaboration active, plutôt qu'à son attention passive?"

Fr. CLOSSET: DIDACTIQUE DES LANGUES VIVANTES - (Deuxieme Partie, Chapitre II Didier, Bruxelles p.37.)

"A modern language properly taught makes the pupil live through a new and exciting experience that offers opportunities of enriching his whole personality.

No aims can be achieved unless we ensure that the language the child is learning is a living thing which he can use and enjoy."

VERNON MALLINSON: TEACHING A MODERN LANGUAGE - (Heinemann 1953 p.31.)

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ORAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM. QU'EST-CE QUE C'EST? ETC.

It is quite possible, even for the non-specialist teacher, to make daily use of the foreign tongue in the classroom. This should be done from the outset. This daily use will accustom the student's ear to the foreign speech pattern, and language confidence will be easily and quickly built up. He will realise that the foreign language is a means of communication which he can begin to use immediately.

When I am ready to give my beginners' classes their first French lesson, I explain that every morning when I come in I shall say to them 'Bonjour, mes enfants!' I write it on the board and repeat it several times. If they cannot guess what it means, I tell them. Next I tell them that I want them to reply 'Bonjour, monsieur'. After practising it individually and together, we try it out. I go out and re-enter saying 'Bonjour, mes enfants'. If their reply is satisfactory, I introduce 'Asseyez-vous'. If they don't grasp it, I make the appropriate gestures. I also write it on the board.

Similarly we practise 'Au revoir, mes enfants' and 'Au revoir, Monsieur'. These greetings will, of course, always be thus exchanged at the beginning and end of every French lesson.

One cannot speak or learn a language without acquiring a stock of words and expressions. Whatever French grammar you use, you will find that some words are to be learnt the very first lesson.

When you have taught a few words, an excellent way to revise

them and also to make a welcome break, is to introduce the expression 'Qu'est-ce que c'est?' pointing to a particular object in the room the name of which has already been taught in French. Explain what it means and tell the children they are to reply C'est le stylo, c'est le livre, and so on. Do this whenever possible with all the new words that are learnt. It is an excellent way of revising work and should be used before learning new words. It can be done for a few minutes every day and different members of the class can come out and do the questioning.

In this way they soon learn all the objects in a classroom. Then the various parts of the body can be taught in this way. You get a boy to come out and face the class, then, pointing to the nose, arm, leg etc., say 'Qu'est-ce que c'est?' 'C'est le nez, c'est le bras, c'est la jambe'. As you say each part in French, write it on the board. Then practise by pointing to the part of the body and getting them to reply. For revision purposes, different members of the class can come out and do the questioning, pointing as you did and saying "Qu'est-ce que c'est?" There is practically no limit to the use you can make of this method of questioning. As their vocabulary grows, and with each new section of work, further and harder questions may be asked. For example, when they have learnt il est, elle est, and où? , you can give them Où est le livre? - Il est sur la table. Où est la plume? - Elle est sur le pupitre.

When you have taught the colours, the questions will be -

Quelle est la couleur de la craie? - Elle est blanche.

Quelle est la couleur du stylo? - Il est rouge.

Quelle est la couleur du mur? - Il est jaune, vert, gris, bleu.

Always see that they answer correctly and that you get a complete sentence in reply.

When the days of the week are learnt, you can ask : Quel est le premier jour de la semaine? - C'est lundi.

Quel est le deuxième jour de la semaine? - C'est mardi. They are thus learning the ordinals at the same time through this way of questioning. This can be extended to include the months:

Quel est le premier mois de l'année? - C'est janvier and so on.

Even with vocabulary that goes outside the classroom, this method can be used: Qu'est-ce que le lion? - C'est un animal. Qu'est-ce que l'âne? - C'est un animal. It can be further extended: Qu'est-ce que le tigre? - C'est un animal sauvage. Qu'est-ce que la vache? - C'est un animal domestique.

Every new word should be pronounced carefully by the teacher and repeated in concert by the class. When individuals reply to your questions, it is important to see that their pronunciation is accurate. It is now recognized that if a pupil is unable to pronounce correctly he is also unable to hear correctly, because of the deficient sense of articulation.

When you come to teach prepositions, you write them on the board, pronounce them carefully, get the class to repeat in concert. Then ask a boy to come out and pointing in front of the table say , 'Mettez-vous là.' Then ask, Où est Georges? or Pierre?



or Robert? as the case may be. They should be able to reply Georges est devant la table. Then repeat the questions and if there is no reply other than what you have just received, say that Georges is in front of something else, too. Then you will elicit: Georges est devant la classe, devant le pupitre, devant le tableau noir. Then place him in front of the door, window etc., by pointing and saying: Mettez-vous là. There should be no dearth of hands raised. Do this with the other prepositions. Individual members of the class can then be asked to come out and question. It is so easy to revise a lesson in this way by a few questions. You yourself can do it, or you can call on individual pupils. Some get quite keen, and as you get more and more things for them to do, it can be given to one particular boy.

I shall give one more example of this sort of oral work. They very quickly learn to perform the various commands: Ouvrez la porte. Fermez la fen<sup>ê</sup>tre, etc. When I teach verbs for the first time in the present tense, I get a boy to come forward. I say "Fermez la porte" As he is doing it, I say to the class: Que fait-il? Il ferme la porte. Then I say to the boy. "Que faites-vous?" Je ferme la porte. When they can repeat correctly and answer correctly themselves, I write the forms on the blackboard. It is quite easy to teach the rest of the forms of the verb in this way. Ouvrez vos cahiers. Fermez vos cahiers. Que faites-vous? Nous fermons nos cahiers, and to individuals: Que font-ils? - Ils ferment leurs cahiers.

This method has several advantages. It is a quick and

effective way of introducing new work and of revising what has already been taught. It secures permanent retention and automatic response. By using it wherever possible to introduce new work and revise old work, speed, accuracy, ease and precision are secured in learning and the learning of new words is done in class in meaningful situations. It enriches the meaning of the individual word by providing numerous associations which make its recall all the easier. It provides opportunity for the whole class to participate in a learning activity which not only gives pleasure, but also a sense of achievement.

In conjunction with the "Qu'est-ce que c'est?" method which, of course, I use in stages as more and more new work is introduced, I teach them as soon as convenient to exchange greetings in French. I get two boys whose names have a French equivalent to stand at opposite sides of the room. They then advance towards the centre and as they meet we hear "Bonjour, Pierre." "Bonjour, Jacques." "Comment allez-vous?" "Très bien, merci, et vous?" "Comme ci comme ça" "Au revoir, Pierre." "Au revoir, Jacques." I frequently teach the second person plural form because, as foreigners, they will never be required to use the tutoiement. Several pupils can try this out until it is mastered. Then two boys can be assigned to do it permanently when the whole class gives a performance of oral work to visitors.

Another useful procedure is to teach them to follow directions. Georges, levez-vous. Venez ici. Prenez la craie. Écrivez au tableau noir le mot 'garçon'. Posez la craie.

Asseyez-vous. All sorts of such directions can be given, all within their vocabulary range and within their comprehension. Different students can come out and give directions to their fellows.

Making person-to-person introductions is another activity which gives practice in speaking and understanding. Here they pretend they are grown up.

Bonjour, Monsieur Le Brun. Bonjour, Monsieur Lenoir.

Permettez-moi de vous présenter mon ami, Monsieur Dupont.

Enchanté, Monsieur. Bonjour, Monsieur.

When we are learning how to express age in French, I usually get a whole row to practise. Each boy asks his neighbour - Quel âge as-tu? J'ai treize ans. I choose, where possible, a row of boys with differing ages. Here we pretend they are French boys and so use 'tu'.

The ability to understand is basic to communication. Effective communication consists of the two factors, ability to speak and ability to understand. The ability to speak gives a feeling of pleasure and a sense of power, even at the start. Language confidence is easily and quickly built up by daily practice. These activities give excellent practice in understanding and speaking, and all pupils can take an active part in the lesson.

## V (c)

ELEMENTARY RHYMES AND CHORAL READING

Very early in my beginners' classes I teach the following little rhyme. Besides learning the rhyme, they are mastering the numbers up to twelve. COMPTEUR

Un, deux, trois,  
 J'irai dans le bois,  
 Quatre, cinq, six,  
 Cueillir des cerises,  
 Sept, huit, neuf,  
 Dans mon panier neuf,  
 Dix, onze, douze,  
 Elles seront toute rouges.

I find they can learn two lines at a time in class, even with all the other work of the lesson. I get them to recite it in a chorus. Often one of the pupils will like to come out and conduct.

Then I teach LES JOURS

Bonjour, lundi  
 Comment va mardi?  
 Très bien, mercredi.  
 Je viens de la part de jeudi  
 Dire à vendredi  
 Qu'il s'apprête samedi  
 Pour aller à la messe dimanche,

This always appeals, and they are thus familiar with the days of the week before they come to them in their lesson books.

I get the class to recite this antiphonally. One boy will come out and point to the right. Half the class will recite the first line. Then he points to the left and the other half recites the second line and so on. I frequently do this with 'Compter' quoted above. With 'Les Jours' two boys will sometimes like to take the parts of 'lundi' and 'mercredi' and treat the rhyme as a little conversation.

I teach them one more little rhyme in these elementary stages of their work: J'AI PASSE' PAR LA PORTE ST. DENIS

J'ai passé par la porte St. Denis,  
 J'ai marché sur la patte d'une souris,  
 La souris a fait cri, cri,  
 Et mon petit conte est fini.

The class recites this in a chorus with one of the pupils conducting. This little rhyme affords two opportunities of introducing something different from the normal class work. First of all you must explain the 'porte' St. Denis. When you have mentioned the fortifications, you then tell them of the need for expansion and of the pulling down of those fortifications and the construction of boulevards. You also have an opportunity to practise intonation. The two rhymes above-mentioned, of course, give a similar opportunity for such practice.

I never use any other rhymes, as I find these sufficient for my purpose. The other oral activities occupy their time fully and they are tackling harder work as the year progresses. They do not forget these rhymes. It takes only a minute or two to

revise them at any time. In the first and subsequent years I continue this work in the form of verse speaking. We learn the poems set by the Alliance Française for the different age groups. The pupils who present themselves get individual attention, but in class we read in a chorus. I have found that reading in groups improves their articulation. Greater precision and distinctness are secured, which carry over into the speech of the individual. Working as a group overcomes the timidity of those pupils who are embarrassed when called upon to recite orally. Pupils are often more careful in group participation. While individuals are sometimes diffident about imitating the teacher's inflections, I find that they lose this diffidence in a group. The teacher must, of course, listen carefully and move about the room in order to detect any mispronunciations, for this method has this danger in it that an incorrect or slovenly pronunciation could pass undetected in group speaking. The advantages of the method outweigh that risk, which is minimised if the teacher is alert and takes suitable precautions. By using these rhymes and suitable poems for choral speaking, the pupil has impressed on him from the outset the beat, the rhythm, and the pattern of the foreign language.

Choral reading can be carried on throughout the school and is particularly effective. For advanced students the fables of La Fontaine offer many suitable selections. These are particularly effective as they combine dialogue with narration. For example,

in the fable of the wolf and the lamb, the class may be divided into three groups, one group representing the lamb, one the wolf, and the other to read the narrative passages. Individuals of special ability can also be trained to interpret the two roles while the class reads the narrative. One need not confine oneself to fables, however, as lyric poetry is also very suitable. Take, for instance, Victor Hugo's charming little song "Mes vers fuiraient, doux et frêles". The first two lines of each verse can be read by one group, while the last two which are a sort of refrain, may be taken by the other. For example,

Mes vers fuiraient, doux et frêles,	)	
Vers votre jardin si beau,	)	1st group
Si mes vers avaient des ailes,	)	
Des ailes comme l'oiseau.	)	2nd group

And so on.

Hugo's chanson about Napoleon III can be most effectively done this way. One group can read the first six lines of each stanza which depict the greatness of the first Emperor. The other group can come in most effectively with the last two biting lines which refer to Napoleon III. The groups of course, can always interchange. This makes for variety and evens the work out in the case of unequal assignments in the reading.

Everyone knows du Bellay's "Heureux qui, comme Ulysse". The class as a whole can read the first verse which consists of a general statement about Ulysses and Jason. The rest of the sonnet into which du Bellay introduces a personal note can either be read by one group, or the class can be divided into three groups,

each reading one verse. I find that this sounds most effective.

This work may be done with prose also, especially prose which is an adaptation of the ballad form. Alphonse Daudet's "Ballades en prose" from his "Lettres de mon moulin" are good examples.

In "La Mort du Dauphin", one group can read the narrative, another can take the part of the little Dauphin. 'Le Sous - Préfet aux Champs' can be used to even greater advantage. For this it is interesting to divide the class into one large group and several small groups. The larger group can read the narration, one boy can be the 'sous-préfet' and the smaller groups will read the words of la fauvette, le bouvreuil, le vieux rossignol, l'alouette, les violettes and le gros piver.

The method employed in choral reading is as follows:-

After reading and discussing the selection with them and clearing up any translation difficulties, I then deal with the pronunciation. Difficult words and difficult combinations are analyzed and repeated slowly. After the technical difficulties have been disposed of, we take the poem or prose selection, plan the interpretation, indicate the intonation and rhythm. After the class has practised as a whole, the parts are assigned to the several groups, and sometimes to individuals.

Choral reading is another effective aid to teaching French. It is new, interesting, stimulating, gives practice in speaking and improves pronunciation.



## V (d)

USE OF SONGS

"We miss, for our pupils, one of the brightest aspects of the foreign genius, if we do not make them acquainted with its expression in song." (1)

It is natural to sing, both at work and at play as folk songs the world over testify. A little singing in the class-room has a wonderfully brightening effect. It is something of which pupils never tire; it helps them to relax; it is an excellent means for establishing a spirit of well-being in the room. It can be done without unduly disturbing neighbouring classes, if a hall or assembly room are not available. Songs are an encouragement and a relief after the sterner parts of the linguistic effort. They can be used at the end of a period to round it out effectively and nicely. Singing is something to which the pupils will look forward and it will be an added incentive for them to finish their assigned work.

Besides the pleasure which the pupils derive from it, singing is a useful exercise for improving pronunciation and increasing vocabulary. Sounds when sung are more decisive than in ordinary speech, and the lengthening of sounds in song tends to eliminate diphthongisation of vowels. Moreover, children become inoculated with the rhythm and intonation of the language. Of the cultural value of songs I shall write later.

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(1) MOORE, H.E. MODERNISM IN LANGUAGE TEACHING (10 ESSAYS)

(Cambridge W. Heffer & Sons Ltd. 1925 p.92)

Little songs can be begun early in the course. I usually begin with "Alouette". Nearly everyone knows the tune, the rhythm is catching and there is the vocabulary of parts of the body. When a piano was not available and in the days before gramophone recordings of suitable songs were available to Australian schools, I used nothing but the words and melody. I did not even use any mechanical aid in getting the right pitch. I was not primarily out for tone, but for choice elocution, for purity of and skill in pronunciation, helped by tune.

I would teach them to say the words in the way they would have to sing them. Then we would try the tune. After we had learnt the song, I would take them to a room containing a piano and accompany them. A good song to follow up with is "Au clair de la lune". Here I would teach them the words, getting them to recite them as they would have to be sung. Then for the actual singing, I would first play it on the piano. Then we would try the tune and when that was satisfactory, they sang to the accompaniment. After a while, for a change, I used to get them to sing unaccompanied.

It is surprising how quickly they acquired a repertoire of songs, even with only five or ten minutes at the end of a lesson and then not every day.

We would then learn "La Mère Michel", "En passant par la Lorraine" and nearly always, at their own request, "La Marseillaise". I used a very good collection "A book of French Songs" selected by E.M. Stephan (Oxford University Press, 1939).

Nowadays the teacher wishing to introduce singing in French lessons, even if he cannot play or sing himself, need have no worries. The University of Sydney has put out four records each containing four well-known songs most suitable for this sort of work. They are called the Audio-Education Series F.7. 5905, F.7. 5906, F. 9. 5907, F.9. 5908. The first, which I have used extensively with beginners, contains *En passant par la Lorraine*, *La Mère Michel*, *Au clair de la lune*, *Alouette*. The words are given on an accompanying card. These songs are sung by a specially trained choir from the University under the direction of native speakers. After the singing, the tune is played by an instrument. Then a native speaker reads the song line by line. After each line, ten seconds are left for the class to repeat it. Then choir and class sing the whole song through together. The same procedure is followed with each song. There are grooves in the recording for each section of the process. One can easily repeat any section, or play one section over and over again until the class has mastered it. The second series consists of *Sur le pont d'Avignon*, *Il était une bergère*, *Nous n'irons plus au bois*, *Chevaliers de la Table Ronde*. The third series contains *Auprès de ma blonde*, *A la claire fontaine*, *Frère Jacques*, *Le Coucou*, *Où est le crayon de ma tante?* The fourth gives us *Le petit navire*, *Le roi d'Yvetot*, *Trois p'tits tambours*, *La Marseillaise*. This is an excellent series. All the teacher has to do is to write the verses on the board, or distribute mimeographed copies. The songs can be heard by the pupils as

many times as the teacher thinks necessary. The tune can be played over until everyone gets it. The words can be repeated line by line until the pupils have mastered accent and intonation.

The Melbourne University has just put out a recording "Songs the French Sing". This recording has several unique features. In the first place it is an attempt to break away from the usual repertoire of French music taught in the schools. It contains no nursery rhymes, but has a wide variety of songs ranging from Christmas carols through folk airs to drinking songs. Secondly, these songs more nearly represent the songs the French really sing than does the usual text-book selection. Thirdly, one song has been included although part of it is sung in patois, and is therefore unsuitable for teaching. Its object is to show that PATOIS is still a strong element, especially in the realm of folk-song.

The first song recorded is, fittingly, the Marseillaise. This is followed by the second national song of France "Le Chant du départ" composed by a brother of the poet André Chénier. I have never seen this song included in any collection for schools and presume it is unfamiliar to Australian students. Then follow two lovely carols "Venez, divin Messie", and "Il est né, le divin Enfant", known in English as "Born is the Child Divine". A number of folk airs follow and the recording concludes with three drinking songs and three "snatches of song ..... heard at convivial occasions from christenings onwards". A booklet to accompany the recording has been issued. This contains, besides the words

of the songs, excellent little introductions to each song. These are short, but adequate, and are extremely interesting. They contain just what one needs to know fully to appreciate the particular song.

With all the above mentioned help every school should be able to devote some time to this work. The growing importance of audio-visual aids in language teaching make the possession of a gramophone or a tape-recorder, and a record or two, a necessity which both headmaster and council will be forced to recognize. If, however, there are schools without these mechanical aids, the burden is thrown upon the teacher. What then? Supposing he cannot play or sing himself? Well, there is always the music master to fall back upon. There are also individual pupils. There would inevitably be some learning either the piano or the violin .. Some schools have recorder groups in addition. Some pupils might be learning the guitar, accordion, or even the humble mouth-organ. Any pupil would be ready to play the tune of a song for the class. A pupil with a good voice could lead the singing, or they could all do it together. A really enthusiastic teacher would not be deterred. His motto would always be "Aut inveniam viam aut faciam".

I have just found another excellent collection called "Chants de France" Jameson and Heacox (Heath & Co. Boston) 1922. This contains (I) Chants patriotiques (II) Chansons de poilus (III) Chants d'autrefois (IV) Rondes populaires (V) Chansons satiriques (VI) Romances modernes (of which Ma Normandie is most

suitable for classes) (VII) Chants Canadiens (VIII) Noël's (IX) Cantiques. At the top of each song is a brief account in French of the Song and the author.

Of particular interest in this collection are the carols and Cantiques which could be learnt instead of, or in addition to, the harder songs. Of the carols, Ancien Noël is very fine and Dans les Ombres de la Nuit could not fail to appeal.

The 'Cantiques' begin with Que Chacun s'empresse to the tune of "Adeste Fideles" which everyone knows.

Another lovely one is Reste avec nous, Seigneur to the tune of Abide with me. Then there is Debout, Sainte Cohorte to Webb's stirring tune (Stand up, Stand up, for Jesus). As they know the old familiar tunes, children find these easy and pleasurable to learn.

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### THE CULTURAL VALUE OF SONGS

If properly taught, the song in the foreign language provides immediate pleasure and remains a cultural treasure for the duration of the pupils' lives. The words and music should be fairly simple. Folk-songs and national airs of the past and present are the most suitable. A folk-song from its very nature lies near to the child's mentality. It is easily understood. It has an infectious gaiety. In French folk-songs the 6/8 time seems to predominate, giving them a gaiety which immediately appeals.

It is important to have variety, of course. One should try to catch many aspects of France in song; and in 1959 appeared an anthology of French folk-songs by Bernard Fuller under the title of "La France qui chante" (William Heinemann) which will enable teachers to do this. It would be impossible to praise it too highly, for its cultural possibilities are very great. It is indeed a representative selection. In it you have Chansons de métier, Chants de Plein Air, Danses, Chansons d'amour, Chants de fête et légendes and Chansons à mimer et à récapitulation. No accompaniment has been given because as Mr. Fuller says "A folk-song is rarely conceived as an accompanied song, and in any case accompaniment should be of the simplest kind - recorder, guitar, accordion or the humble mouth-organ are preferable to the piano" (Preface, p.6)

In his excellent preface, Mr. Fuller tells us that two collectors and musicians, Julien Tiersot and Joseph Canteloube,

spent the greater part of their lives recording songs throughout the land of France. And what is important for us, many of these songs are still sung in their natural surroundings. France, in spite of great changes, has remained a land of tradition and has conserved many local customs and festivals. Often the festivals are the occasion of song and dance. French children receive a good training in unaccompanied singing. According to Mr. Fuller their repertoire is more considerable than that of English children. If we can teach some of these songs to our Australian children, they will not only be singing songs which are actually sung to-day by their French counterparts, but will be in contact with the sources of musical culture of a foreign country - "la plus pure, la plus humaine et à coup sûr la plus ancienne des traditions de la France" ( Joseph Canteloube) quoted by Fuller in his preface, p.6.

Before the folk-song is taught, the teacher should give a brief explanation of the background of the song. Here is where Mr. Fuller's book is so useful. Not only are the songs classified the way we have already mentioned, but brief useful notes are given at the bottom of each page telling you where it is sung, anything that is worth noting in the music (such as the imitation of a spinning wheel) and any relevant historical or geographical information. All this provides a splendid opportunity for the presentation of cultural material and, while pursuing an enjoyable activity, the pupils are imbibing a great deal of information about the history, civilization and cultural



achievements of a foreign people.

When the background of the song has been explained, the teacher should read the words. The class repeats in concert and then individual pupils read. The text should then be studied for content. A few careful questions by the teacher should bring out the meaning of the song. Where there are a number of verses, one may be taken at a time.

If no suitable instrument is available, the tune could be played on a piano until it was mastered and then the selection sung unaccompanied. We shall consider briefly a few of these songs. The first one comes in the group 'Chansons de métier.' It is called 'Bergère, si tu m'aimes' It is a spinning song from Auvergne. I would show the pupils where Auvergne is on a map and tell them the song was a spinning song. When I was sure they knew the meaning of the words, I would teach them the tune. We would then consider the chorus with its "Ti ou li ou li'ou etc" and I should try to get from them that it represented the sound of a spinning wheel. The next one is a sailor's song called "Sont les fill's de la Rochelle." An opportunity is afforded here in the introductory talk of discussing La Rochelle and its trade with the South American continent, and its passenger traffic with the islands of Ré and Oléron which lie just off the coast. And of course one could not omit Richelieu and his siege of La Rochelle in 1628. One could also show the pupils the famous painting of Richelieu walking on the dyke at La Rochelle. The song is full of nautical terms, mainly concerned with sails and rigging.

Among the 'Danses' is the 'Farandole du Rhône.' I should certainly teach this to my pupils. Nearly everyone would have read *Le Secret de Maître Cornille* of Alphonse Daudet where on Sundays in the good times of the wind mills the villagers went to the mills in groups and to the sound of the fife danced farandoles "jusqu' à la noire nuit." The farandole, as Mr. Fuller's note explains, belongs to the Rhone Valley and to Provence. It is usually danced by a large number of people who form a long chain and dance through the streets to the sound of pipe and drum. The folk-song 'Farandole du Rhône' is a moderately slow dance in 6/8 time and, after having learnt the two verses and the tune, the children would have quite a good idea of the rhythm of the dance. If I were teaching this to Seniors, I should read to them a description of one of these dances from Daudet's "Numa Roumestan."

Among the "Chants de fête et légendes" there are two which have a rich background. One, 'Le Joli Mois de mai' celebrates the great popular festival of European Countries - May Day.

In the fourth stanza we have these lines -

"Partons donc pour la guerre,  
Pour y servir le roi François,  
Nous lui serons fideles"

which show that the song goes back at least as far as the 16th century. François 1st was King of France from 1515-1547.

The other is 'Voici Saint-Jean, ma mie' and marks "Saint Jean" one of the pagan festivals taken over by the early Christian Church. Although a "Chant de fête", the first verse

has a touch of sadness -

"Voici Saint-Jean, ma mie,

Nous devons nous quitter.

Dans une autre patrie

lé! lé!

Nous irons habiter."

The reason is given in the last two lines of the fourth stanza:

"C'est la Saint-Jean nouvelle,

De maître nous changeons"

For the farm-servant this day marked the end of a year's contract. He would receive his wages, leave the farm and village, and seek employment elsewhere away from his friends.

This collection not only provides enough songs to last the school-life of the pupil, but provides also a wealth of cultural material which will increase his sympathies and broaden the horizon of his mind.

## V (e)

GAMES

Another means of arousing intense interest especially with beginners is to play a game. These can be played as a relief after other work, or to fill in the last few minutes of a lesson. Here are a few which can be used to advantage in a classroom.

(1) ON MET LE COUVERT

The class is divided into two teams. The first pupil of team A says "J'ai mis la nappe sur la table". The first pupil of team B says "J'ai arrangé les fourchettes." You continue like this in turns and each pupil must find a different thing to put on the table. For each correct sentence 1 mark is scored. If a pupil repeats a word already used, or misses his turn, his team loses one mark. At the end the scores are added to find the winning team. This is excellent for learning the vocabulary for things on the table.

When the pupils have learnt the perfect tense, here is another useful little game:

(2) LES ANIMAUX

The first pupil says "Hier dans la rue j'ai vu un éléphant." The second continues "Hier dans la rue j'ai vu un éléphant et un singe." and so on.

Another similar game is -

(3) AU MARCHÉ

The first pupil says "Je suis allé au marché et j'ai acheté du beurre." The second continues with "Je suis allé au

marché et j'ai acheté du beurre et du fromage" and so on.

One could vary this by using J'ai couru, with a change of auxiliary..

(4) One other little game I use to advantage is this.

A pupil thinks of an animal and makes once the cry of this animal. The class must guess and say in French what animal it represents. The one who guesses correctly takes his place.

This game to be effective must be played quickly.

These games not only give beginners enjoyment, they treat them as games certainly, but are learning vocabulary and attaining a certain speech fluency all the time.

## V (f)

USE OF DIALOGUES AND PLAYS

For over twenty years, I have used certain dialogues and plays in my French classes and have made this work an essential part of language instruction.

The interest and enthusiasm aroused by the learning and acting of these dialogues and plays are remarkable. Moreover, once get the children interested in the language by this method, and you will find that in most cases that interest is maintained throughout the course.

Other benefits accrue from the use of this method and will be discussed later. At the moment, we are concerned with interest and all that it means in learning anything of whatever nature.

A teacher can so plan his lesson that some time can be given to play-acting. Once the children's enthusiasm for play-acting is aroused, they will eagerly look forward to that part of the lesson in which they can indulge it. This acts as an incentive to master as quickly as possible what you have decided to cover in the particular lesson, and even the learning of verbs and difficult points of grammar will not lessen their interest in the subject, but will be taken as a matter of course. This method is so easy to use and can be begun during the very first lesson.

The most useful book I know for introducing this work to classes is "French Dialogues for Beginners" by E.M. Buckle (London University Tutorial Press, 1937).

I always begin with either "Le Marchand d'animaux" or "Le Crime." Sometimes I start one and, after they have learnt some of it, begin the other. Then I continue with both, one one day, one another, until both are learnt. There are always some children eager to act. Others, as they become familiar with the words are eager to join in too. Some find that a specific part suits them particularly well. If their acting is good, I let them have that part, and it becomes THEIR part. After a while, another child might become attracted to that particular part and might think he could do it better. He is then allowed to challenge the first. They are both asked to act, the challenger first, then the other. If one is obviously better than the other, he has the part. But the unsuccessful one is not out of it. I form another group, with him taking the part in question. His interest is thus maintained and his amour propre safeguarded. In this way, healthy emulation is aroused and the interest of the class is, if anything, increased. I have had as many as 4 teams able to act quite creditably a particular play. If one team is noticeably superior in pronunciation and acting powers, it has the privilege of acting in front of visitors or at school concerts. All see the sense of this and, far from resenting it, are proud for the best team to represent the particular class in public. But all teams are asked to act. Any day when I have a few minutes to spare, I say: "We'll now act 'Le Crime'

with number two team, or three team, as the case may be. It is wise, of course, to give the teams equal opportunity of showing their skill. The children always remember whose turn it is, even if you don't.

I have never compelled children to act against their will. Yet I have never had one child in a class who has not voluntarily acted at least one part in a particular play. Enthusiasm is contagious. When a whole class becomes infected, when acting plays is accepted as normal class procedure and eagerly anticipated, the shy child loses his shyness, the timid his timidity, the diffident his diffidence - to this extent, that he will act a part, even though a minor one, and think nothing of it. Through constant repetition, the dialogue or play becomes quite familiar to everyone. All children, without perhaps realising it, learn all parts simultaneously. If a child taking a particular part is away, there will always be someone else ready to step in. Some children can quite easily substitute in three or four different parts. It is not at all unusual to see those not taking a regular part mouthing the words as they are being spoken by the actors.

Let us imagine we are giving a class its first French lesson. We can plan to teach just so much and leave ten to fifteen minutes for introducing a dialogue. I usually say: "Now we are going to learn a little play" I write the title on the blackboard and, where the title is very like English, as in 'Le Marchand d'animaux', someone can usually give me the meaning.



Then I say: "Imagine you are a shopkeeper and that you sell animals. Supposing a customer should walk into your shop, what would you say to him?" Nearly always you will get the reply: "Good morning, or good afternoon." Then you can write up 'Bonjour, monsieur.' If you were the shopkeeper, what would you say next? you ask. It is not difficult to get the reply "What can I do for you?" or "can I help you?" So you write up "Qu'y a-t-il pour votre service?"

You then have:

Le Marchand: Bonjour, monsieur. Qu'y a-t-il pour votre service?

The children already know what it means. All you have to do is to give them the pronunciation and get them to repeat it all together and separately. When you are satisfied that their pronunciation is reasonably good, ask whether anyone would like to come out and act the shopkeeper. If there is any hesitation, ask a likely looking child. Let the child refer to the board, or bring his book with him if he wishes. It is necessary at the initial stages to inspire confidence, so praise lavishly. Once the ice is broken and confidence inspired, enthusiasm does not take long to kindle. One does not need stage or properties. What there is in even the most impoverished classroom is enough. The imagination of the young will do the rest. For instance, in this play, the teacher's table, or a desk moved out to the front, can be the counter behind which the shopkeeper stands.

Then you ask any child to come in through the door and

walk up to the table, thus representing the customer.

The shopkeeper, with a little bow, says (or reads) "Bonjour, Monsieur. Qu'y a-t-il pour votre service?"

This can be done several times, then repeated with different actors. It will not be long, according to my experience, before they start volunteering. We next give the customer his name (M. Riche) and some words to say. We write up:

M. Riche: Je veux acheter un animal.

Often the children can suggest the words themselves, especially with a little prompting. Then the words of the play, albeit in a foreign tongue, become very truly their own and it is not long, in any case, before they really live the part they are taking.

Repeat the same procedure with the new part, familiarizing them through repetition and practice, with different boys taking M. Riche's role. If the class is a bright one and there is sufficient time, I continue:

Le Marchand: Oui, Monsieur. Un animal sauvage?

M. Riche: Oh ... pas trop sauvage.

When the class understands what the words mean and can say them reasonably well, different children can be allowed to act the whole play to date.

This is quite sufficient for the first lesson. How much you introduce at first depends on extraneous factors such as time at your disposal, intelligence of the class, age at which they are beginning the language. The point is you can in this way begin immediately, before they really know any French words.

It will not be long before you will be pleasantly surprised at what they really have mastered. What is more, these plays can be done in conjunction with their set course. A few minutes each lesson devoted to this sort of work not only does not interfere with the progress of the course, but arouses such interest and enthusiasm that the whole learning process is benefited and accelerated.

Next lesson, or whenever they are ready, and you yourself are ready, the shop's wares are introduced. These, as the title implies, are animals. The first animal for sale is a donkey. You explain to the class that the animals are French animals and will make appropriate French noises, not English ones.

You get a boy out and either sit him on a chair by the table, or on the table itself. The merchant asks M. Riche "Voulez-vous cet âne?" pointing to the donkey. The donkey goes "Hi han Hi han !" This is always very well received. The noise the donkey makes provokes amused laughter and often quite dull boys are eager to take this part. Some are so skilled at making the particular noise required that they are always given this part. They thus have a sense of achievement. This is something THEY can do and they look forward to doing it. Even if not very bright, they do not feel discouraged and, rather than become resentful of this new subject, are prepared to take an interest in it. When several children have tried the donkey's part, they are ready to observe M. Riche's reaction to the braying. Many children have distinct histrionic ability and will

quite naturally portray anger, fear, disgust, amusement, astonishment.

I allow complete freedom of interpretation, so long as it does not exceed the limits of verisimilitude or interrupt a nearby class.

M. Riche, then with appropriate gestures, will say "Oh, non. Sa voix est trop désagréable." When the play so far can be acted from memory by different groups, you are ready to introduce the cat.

From among the volunteers you are certain to get at this stage, choose a child and seat him near the donkey. Then the merchant, pointing to the cat, says: "Voulez-vous ce chat?" The cat immediately says "Miaou. Miaou." Make sure that the child is taught to give full value to the French vowels (m j a u). Some children make most realistic sounds and, following out their own interpretation, attempt to scratch the merchant. M. Riche, bringing out the full flavour of the word "déteste" informs the merchant: "Je déteste les chats" Another animal is now required, a sheep. Place the sheep with the others in front of the class, leaving a little distance between them for M. Riche to walk about and inspect them, if he so desires. Now get the merchant to say hopefully: "Regardez ce joli mouton blanc." It is now the sheep's turn to reply: "Bée, bée." Here, incidentally, is an excellent opportunity to teach them the /E sound, explaining the position of the tongue behind the lower front teeth. Make them keep the tongue, teeth, and lips still

while prolonging the sound, and a very good imitation of a sheep is made.

M. Riche refuses the sheep on the grounds that "Les moutons ne sont pas intelligents." Now the remaining animal, the dog, is introduced. By this time nearly the whole class will want to come out and try the dog's part. I usually get "le chien" to squat down a little way away from the others and tell him to pretend to jump up the merchant when his name is mentioned. Le Marchand: "Alors, voulez-vous ce petit chien?" Le Chien: Wouf, Wouf. At last M. Riche is suited. Eagerly he says: "Oui, j'aime beaucoup cet animal. Combien est-ce?" I always ask the class what is the emphatic word in this sentence, after I have written it up and explained it. The children see at once that it is 'beaucoup' and I get them to stress it a little in their speech. The merchant's reply is "Vingt francs, Monsieur, et ce n'est pas cher." Here one should give them some real French money - either coins or paper money. I used a hundred franc note for this purpose, changing the 'vingt francs' of the text into 'cent francs'. This note was always given to the actor portraying M. Riche. With a flourish he would whip it out of his pocket saying: "Très bien. Voici 1'argent." The merchant would then say "Merci, Monsieur," though it is not given in the text. After that M. Riche goes out of the room saying: "Viens, mon toutou." The 'toutou' follows, barking and jumping up and down his new master.

The class will now have a complete play ready to act on all

occasions. There will be a demand for another. For the second play, I choose one a good deal harder and far more exciting. It all depends on the class, of course, but it is possible to teach two of these plays simultaneously. Where I had a class of likely looking beginners, I often started with "Le Crime." In this play there is plenty of scope for action - action of a sort that appeals to real boys the world over. There is a fight, a shooting, a policeman, an argument, and a chase. There are no directions in these plays, but boys and teacher soon give their own interpretation. Sometimes a few liberties with the text make for greater verisimilitude. In such cases I never hesitate.

The play opens with two Apaches who come in quarrelling. The scene is a street in Paris. If there is a verandah or corridor outside the room, the actors can enter from there. If not, an aisle between two rows of desks will be all that is required. I tell the class: "You are not good, well-dressed X schoolboys. You are two dirty, cut-throats. You have stolen some money and are quarrelling over it. I want two boys to come out and pretend to fight." Need I say that you do not lack for volunteers if you have a class of high-spirited youngsters? Some give a really good performance of a fight. Many of the actions, I fear, are Hollywood inspired. No matter. It is merely a means to an end. When two or three groups have worked off their surplus energy in this way, to the great enjoyment of the class, it is time to give them something to say.

You follow the same procedure as in the first play, making sure they understand what the words mean and that they acquire a recognisably French accent. Write up on the blackboard:

1st Apache: C'est mon argent, voleur.

2nd " : C'est à moi, vous dis-je.

1st Apache: Donnez-le-moi, tout de suite.

2nd " : Jamais, jamais infâme.

When everyone can say it and when it is quite understood, call out your two best fighters. Get them to come in fighting. Then make them say the above. Then tell them to fight harder than ever. After a good struggle the first Apache will draw out a revolver. (Many are the objects which have served as a revolver. Anything from forefingers, pencils, rulers, to toy revolvers. Whatever they use, imagination will do the rest.)

When the revolver appears, I get the second Apache to raise his hands and cry "Non! non! non! with increasing terror. Then the first Apache shoots, and the second falls to the ground. A toy revolver with some caps is the ideal requirement here. If the second Apache is a good actor, he will appear to have been shot badly. I once had a Chinese boy who always wanted this particular part. He pretended that the bullet had entered his stomach. Bent double, with eyes rolling wildly, and desperately clutching his stomach, he would fall heavily, with a look of extreme pain on his face. Most of us felt rather unwell as we watched. Yet we were fascinated at the same time.

After the second Apache falls to the ground, the first, facing the class, says in a voice which should show some

perturbation: "Il est mort. Qu'est-ce que je vais faire?"

Then he decides to search the pockets of the second Apache.

Just as he begins, a Monsieur Legrand runs up. The boy taking this part can run down an aisle between two rows of desks.

This will do for a street. And now we have the opportunity of portraying the excitability of the French. Monsieur

Legrand addresses the first Apache: "Qu'est-ce qu'il y a ?

Que signifie ce bruit?" Then noticing the second Apache

lying on the floor, he continues: "Ah! Un cadavre.

Au secours! Au secours! Au secours!" At this point

l'Agent arrives, usually, I find, with a ruler for a baton.

He says to M. Legrand "Me voici. Il y a un crime?"

M. Legrand, pointing to the first Apache, replies: "Oui.

Arrêtez cet homme. C'est un assassin. Il a un revolver."

The policeman: "C'est vrai." Then, going up to the Apache,

baton raised, he thunders: "C'est votre revolver?" These

words are the signal for the second Apache to crawl unobtrusively out of the way and disappear.

The first Apache emphatically denies that the revolver belongs to him. "Non, non, point du tout." He is not prepared for

what follows. L'Agent: "Alors je vous arrête, car vous avez un revolver qui n'est pas le vôtre." Moved to admiration,

M. Legrand remarks: "Très bien, Monsieur l'Agent." Rather

startled at the sudden arrest the Apache stammers out "Non, non, je veux dire oui - c'est mon revolver." Upon this damaging

admission he is immediately re-arrested: "Alors je vous arrête,



car vous êtes l'assassin." Such logic calls forth "Magnifique, Monsieur l'Agent" from the still admiring M. Legrand. The policeman then calls upon M. Legrand for assistance: "Monsieur, voulez-vous tenir cet homme?" "Volontiers, Monsieur" is the quick reply and he holds the Apache by the collar. The policeman then inquires about the victim: "Et maintenant, où est la victime?" M. Legrand, pointing, says "Dans ce coin." The policeman goes to look, and finding no one, says in an astonished voice "Il n'est pas là." M. Legrand, considerably surprised, says "Comment? Il n'est pas là?" at the same time letting go of the Apache's collar. The latter, seizing his opportunity, makes a bolt for it. Unperturbed, M. Legrand moves over to the policeman. They are both concerned with finding the one who slipped away early in the piece, and the play closes with M. Legrand and l'Agent running out in pursuit of the corpse to the words of M. Legrand: "Chassons-le. Au voleur!"

You will now have two plays learnt. You will probably have several groups able to act them. You can now give the actors the opportunity of dressing up for their parts. One of the great advantages of these plays is that they require no elaborate costumes and can be performed in the classroom. An old coat, a scarf, and a beret transform the good little school-boy into a fierce Apache - especially if he wears a false moustache! A blue coat with brass buttons and a special cap will do for a policeman and a postman (who will appear in another play). They will soon get something to represent a

baton and a postman's bag, if not the real things. A toy revolver with caps becomes a lethal weapon when used in the play. M. Riche and M. Legrand can easily dress for their parts. Children like dressing up and will often provide everything necessary for their own part themselves. It does not take long for them to transform themselves for the play. While they are doing this, the rest of the class can be kept busy with other oral work. This dressing up can be a reward for work well done and an encouragement to tackle further dramatic work. It is easy to fit in near the end of the week, or term as the case may be. These playettes take only two to three minutes to act.

I have invariably found that this acting of playettes performed as part of the ordinary class work for five or ten minutes two or three times a week with now this play, now that, eventually provides you with a group able to act at end of term functions and at school concerts.

I have endeavoured to show how simple and feasible it is to make these playettes part of the usual class lesson. The time given need not be long, and with planning on the part of the teacher the specified amount of ordinary work can be accomplished. Constant repetition, plus enthusiasm engendered by the work itself, get the words of the plays learnt without any extra time being given to them. Pupils are actually saying things in French. They are constantly repeating every day constructions and idioms. When they come to learn grammatical constructions in

to act the old favourites, those plays already learnt are not forgotten. Even when in the throes of learning a new one, it is a welcome change to perform those plays they know in full.

The third play I choose is "La Boule de neige." You write up the title and explain that it is winter and the city streets are covered with snow. The scene opens with Charles and Georges gathering snowballs. Proud of his efforts, Charles says: "Regardez cette magnifique boule de neige, Georges." Everyone will know the meaning of that. Georges too, is proud of his and replies "Et celle-ci. Il faut les jeter tout de suite. Écoutez. J'entends des pas." When the class have understood what Georges is saying and this first part is ready to be tried out, you will have no lack of volunteers wanting to take the parts. These two parts are particularly good for those not so quick at learning because although they are important parts in the play and are full of action, there is not a great deal to say. When you are ready, you can continue, following the same methods as outlined for the first two plays. If you have plenty of pupils offering, different groups can be formed, as before, and opportunity is thus afforded for frequent repetition. The whole class will learn the play in this way and everyone will benefit.

Charles continues: "Quand je vois son nez, je dis 'Un, deux, trois' et nous jetons." Suddenly Georges spots the person who happens to be a policeman. (A boy can be deputised to advance slowly towards the front of the class down an aisle between the rows of desks) Georges' excited 'Le voilà' is followed

by Charles' "Un, deux, trois." Simultaneously two snowballs are thrown and the policeman receives them right in the face. His mild "Mille Tonnerres!" sounds quite exciting to beginners who think it is the last word in oaths. The boys taking this part usually say it as though it were. The policeman continues "J'ai de la neige plein les yeux. Ah, les vauriens!" As he says this, he can pretend to be wiping the snow out of his eyes. Charles and Georges, of course, have long since disappeared. Then 'Le Facteur' comes on the scene. He usually approaches from the opposite side of the class on a level with the policeman. "Qu'est-ce qu'il y a? Un accident?" he asks. The policeman seizes him by the arm saying: "Vous m'avez jete une boule de neige." The postman indignantly denies this: "Jamais de la vie." The policeman insists: "Mais si. Vous etes la seule personne dans cette rue." Fortunately the postman is able to counter with "Non, non, voici une dame qui passe. Elle vous dira que je n'ai pas jete de neige." Here is an opportunity to take the part of the opposite sex. The 'lady' will approach from the opposite side, as did the postman. Often the boy taking the part of the lady really enters into his part. Brigitte Bardot and Gina Lollobrigida could scarcely do better!

So long as his acting is not mere tomfoolery (and I have never experienced that yet) I do not check anyone who attempts to put life into his part - even if that 'life' is clearly modelled on Hollywood interpretations. If ever the acting is too boisterous or too exaggerated for my taste, I do not reprove.

I wait until it is finished. Then I say that I think it would be more effective if such and such a change were made. Then I get them to do it again, this time warmly commending them. A child might be really trying to give a fine performance. The best will always put all they have into their parts. To reprove or ridicule would not only wound, it would dampen enthusiasm and make others chary of trying to give a good performance.

The female part causes plenty of amusement when the occasion comes for them to dress up.

The policeman now addresses the lady: "Madame, vous m'avez jeté une boule de neige." Her astonished "Moi, Monsieur? C'est ridicule" is met with an outburst which gives plenty of scope to the histrionic ability of the young actor taking this role. "C'est un complot. Si ce n'est pas vous, Madame, c'est le facteur - et si ce n'est pas le facteur, c'est vous." When the young actor has mastered the words, he can pretend to get quite excited, waving his arms and pointing now at the lady, now at the postman. The postman's "C'est abominable. Ce n'est pas vrai. Je suis un homme raisonnable," is followed by the lady's "Ai-je l'air d'une personne qui jette des boules de neige? Quelle idée!" While they are thus arguing Charles and Georges, emboldened by their first success, creep up with more ammunition. Once more Charles gives the signal: "Un, deux, trois" This time the whole group is pelted with snow. After the lady's horrified "Ah, quelle horreur!"

the postman spots the culprits: "Les voilà, les coupables!"

The policeman cries "Chassons-les" and everyone runs off in pursuit. For class purposes snowballs can be made of used paper rolled up into balls, with the direction that the people aimed at must not be hit in the face. For stage purposes, little paper bags of flour give the illusion of snowballs.

Your beginners forms will now have a repertoire.

Should they clamour for more, and should you have the time and opportunity, you can try an interesting little experiment.

I always do. This time I choose a "petite scène à jouer" from "Histoires droles" by E. Potts (J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 1956) entitled "Dans le restaurant."

I tell the class that Monsieur and Madame Leblanc, with their two children Henri, and Henriette, are looking for a restaurant, because it is noon and they are in Paris. Suddenly Madame sees one. What will she say to her husband? Always someone will say "Here's a restaurant," and often, without being prompted will add, "my dear."

So I write on the board (not allowing them to copy anything down in this sketch).

Madame: Voici un restaurant, mon cher.

Similarly we arrive at -

Monsieur: Ah, bon! Entrons. Where possible, I find it stimulating to try to get the exact English equivalents before I write up the actual words of the play. It is, of course, possible to do this only in places, but the exercise is well worth

it. We next get some seats and put them round the table on the platform. The actors enter, Monsieur politely placing his wife and seeing that the children are correctly placed round the table. He calls: Garçon! As nothing happens, a louder Garçon!! is heard. When there is still no reply, he bangs on the table and calls louder still: Garçon!!! 'Le Garçon' who is obviously lazy, slowly enters, saying "Tout de suite, monsieur." Then he offers the menu: "Monsieur désire...?" and takes out a notebook and pencil. Henri immediately sings out "Une glace! Une glace!" followed by Henriette: "Moi aussi! Moi aussi!" Madame quietens them with: "Silence, les enfants!"

We now call for volunteers to act the little scene thus far. All the characters have been introduced; no one has very much to say; what they do say is simple, apposite, and easy to remember. I find that children can act this immediately, with little reference to what is written on the board. When one group has acted, another can take its place. Often nearly a whole class will want to take part. Some groups may be so promising that you will like to see them acting several times. We are now ready to continue. Monsieur Leblanc politely hands the menu to his wife and says "Qu'est-ce que nous mangeons?" Madame says "Une salade ..." and the waiter starts to write it down.

Monsieur Leblanc then orders "Du veau ..." only to be told by the waiter "Pas de viande aujourd'hui, monsieur. C'est vendredi." As this is exactly half the scene, I usually stop here the first time this sketch is introduced. Before they try

this next bit, there is an excellent opportunity to talk a little about French meals and to give them a typical French midday menu. When everyone has understood the French words on the board, including the reference to lack of meat on Friday, we can act it all over again from the beginning.

I choose a time for this sketch when a whole period can be given up to it. Often when someone is away and you have to stand in, this is an excellent way of filling in the lesson. The experiment I mentioned is this. You will find that half this sketch will be completely learnt in one lesson. If you have them the next day you will find them able to act it again without any words being written up. I have frequently tried this on a class I did not usually teach, when I had to fill in a lesson for someone else. They have enjoyed it so much that they have requested another lesson to finish it. Needless to say, that request was always granted.

In the second half of the sketch, Madame continues (when she finds that there is no meat) "Du poisson alors. Une sole avec des pommes frites." As he writes it down the waiter says: "Et après...?" Henri immediately bursts in with "Des glaces! Des glaces!" so Monsieur orders "Quatre glaces." When they have understood what "pommes frites" are, you can get them to bring out pens, pencils and rulers and show them how the table would be set. A rubber can do for a knife-rest. You will explain that when they have cut up the food they will transfer their forks to their right hands, so that they can keep breaking



their bread with their left hands. The children will thus learn something more about the customs of the country whose language they are studying, and the play will seem very real to them. The waiter will now leave with the order and will come back with the 'salade'. Everyone will pretend to cut it up, carefully following the instructions about eating that you have just given them. Suddenly Henriette startles everyone with "Papa! Maman! Regardez! Une bête dans la salade!" Madame exclaims "Oh, mon Dieu!

Quelle horreur!" Monsieur, angrily calls "Garçon!" The waiter slowly comes in and Monsieur continues "Regardez! Il y a une bête dans la salade!" The waiter, quite indifferent, replies: "Impossible, monsieur. C'est vendredi. Nous ne servons pas de viande aujourd'hui."

You will find that the children are very clever at improvising. A large exercise book will be used as a tray and smaller ones for plates. Once they get used to play acting they will provide their own properties. One day when they knew they would be having this little play, they brought knives, forks, paper plates, lettuce leaves and a black jelly bean for the 'bête'. As I mentioned before, I have found that in two lessons they can memorize this sketch so well that they need have no written reference. This is one play I get them really and truly to make their own.

I have now described in detail how I use plays as an integral part of class work, and have shown the methods employed.

It now remains for me to mention briefly other plays and dialogues I have found useful. Taken in conjunction with other oral work and with the usual programme of classwork, you will have enough to carry you on to the third or even fourth year. Two other playettes from Buckle's "French Dialogues for beginners" are very suitable - 'Le Boucher' and 'Le Revenant.'

The first causes much amusement. It is quite a tongue-twister and gives excellent practice in pronouncing 's'. Three ladies and a butcher comprise the cast. One at a time the ladies enter and ask "Combien ces six saucissons-ci?" The first time the butcher says "Cent soixante sous ces six saucissons-ci." The indignant customer leaves the room saying "Cent soixante sous ces six saucissons-ci! Ces six saucissons-ci sont si chers!"

The price is reduced next time to 'cent sous' only to be rejected in almost the same words. Finally, the third lady is offered the sausages for 'six sous'. "Six sous ces six saucissons-ci!" she exclaims, 'Ce n'est pas cher' and takes them. Besides the consonantal practice of 's', it affords practice in the vowel 'i'.

Le Revenant is considerably harder and contains useful expressions such as "Encore un quart d'heure avant d'aller nous coucher." It, too, can be made quite exciting. I take a few liberties and introduce 'un revenant'. An old sheet with a pair of eye holes made in it suits admirably as a costume for the ghost. The cast consists of Charles, Georges, and the frightened

little Julie who insists on their looking 'sous le canapé,' 'derrière les fauteuils et les rideaux' to see if there are any robbers. While this is going on, the 'revenant' can glide out from behind a cupboard or door and stand motionless with arms outstretched. No one need tell them what to do then!

After I have taught them the plays above-mentioned, I use "Trente Petits Dialogues" by Marc Ceppi (London, G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1946). In these you have a rapid exchange of short and brisk sentences. The vocabulary is suited to second-year pupils, and the subject-matter deals with humorous incidents in everyday life. I use "Gavroche pêche," "Un monsieur qui dort bien," "Les dangers du chemin de fer," "Un monsieur a perdu son parapluie" and "Une bonne journée." For the third year, or, if the classes are bright and want a longer play, near the end of the second year, I use two plays from "French Dramatic Scenes" by C. Abel-Musgrave (London, Edward Arnold). These are much longer, have more characters, and afford much greater scope for the actors.

The first "Dans un restaurant," has six actors and consists of about seven pages of witty dialogue. It also consists of action and the whole situation - the antics of the 'garçon' his amusing mistakes, the reaction of the diners - make a delightful play which never fails to appeal.

Perhaps the best play for boys is "Conversation pendant la leçon". In it you have a 'professeur' and eleven pupils. The play takes place in a classroom. The misdemeanours of the eleven pupils are dear to every schoolboy's heart. In some cases, I fear, they call up pleasant memories. There is plenty of action

and the dialogue is natural and lively. It consists of eight and a half pages and is quite an ambitious undertaking, yet once started, they will want to continue and finish.

I have been using these particular plays (with the exception of the first mentioned 'Dans le restaurant') for a period of fifteen years. Indeed, I have been using Miss Buckle's plays for at least twenty. I have kept to this combination for the following reasons:

- (1) They never cease to appeal to the pupils
- (2) They are a happy combination of useful conversational material and brisk action
- (3) They are eminently suitable for classroom activity
- (4) They can also be performed at school concerts, because their incident and setting are so colourful that the spectator needs only the most rudimentary knowledge of French in order to follow them and enjoy their humour.

Dramatization, then, need not be delayed until the annual school concert or end of term performance. Such performances have their undoubted use as out of school activities. But the classroom dramatization is pedagogically more valuable. Moreover, it can be used every week, or even every day, with every pupil in the class, from the very first lesson. The very fact that several pupils have the same part offers opportunity for friendly rivalry and skill in interpretation. By using plays such as I have mentioned, plays which are humorous and offer plenty of scope for action, you afford your pupils

enjoyment and entertainment and they engage in them with enthusiasm. The dialogue being simple, natural and lively, and containing conversational constructions of modern French, the play is not only an enjoyable and diverting activity, but provides for an effective revision of vocabulary and the use of the spoken language in a natural setting.

Finally, its pedagogic value lies in the constant opportunity for the repetition of words, phrases, and idioms which thus impress themselves on the pupil's memory and become part of his foreign language make-up.

Miss Buckle has also published "A second book of French dialogues" University Tutorial Press 1938. This has been reprinted (1951) and is still available.

It is particularly valuable in that the dramatic work is combined with careful grading of grammar content. The dialogues are interesting in themselves, are written in modern idiomatic French and are topical. This is eminently suitable for higher classes. Due attention has been paid to word-frequency and common idioms and constructions have been repeated many times in varying forms.

## V (g)

CLASS PERFORMANCE OF ORAL WORK

When the class has learnt several interesting things to do - questioning, exchanging greetings, giving directions, reciting rhymes, singing a song, acting a play or two - I let them give a performance amongst themselves. We draw up a little programme and appoint a master of ceremonies. The master of ceremonies has a little ticket fixed to his lapel on which is neatly printed "Maître des cérémonies." He announces each item. All those who have to come out and question, or conduct, or give directions, or take part in the plays, will know beforehand. Actually everyone will be doing something - answering questions, reciting rhymes or singing a song.

I let the class take over and go and sit at the back of the room. Permitting pupils to assume control of the situation gives them a feeling of power, satisfaction and pleasure.

As we learn more things to do, the performance takes longer. Then I ask an interested colleague, another French teacher, or the Classics or German Masters to come and watch. The class loves to perform to someone else. If ever a visitor is brought along by the Headmaster, after the introductions have been made and he is seated, I stop what I'm doing and let the pupils assume direction of activities.

They perform all they know, following the order of the last occasion and directed by the Maître des Cérémonies. Everything

you will find will go splendidly when classes are used to this sort of thing. The consciousness that the success of the whole depends on the excellence of the contribution of each calls for the best and puts them on their mettle. When University lecturers in methods of teaching foreign languages have brought their students along to watch, I do the same, except that in the middle of the programme I take over and give a lesson, and then let the class continue on their own. Below is a typical class programme for later on in the year when they have learnt more things to do. The maître des cérémonies announces each item, where necessary giving a short explanation such as: "We shall now show you how we learn prepositions in French" or "We have learnt the days of the week in a rhyme" and so on. Then the boy taking charge of the activity, or conducting the rhyme or song will step out and take over. Always a different boy will be found to whom you can give the direction of the activity. When a play is announced, all the actors chosen for the parts come forward quietly and get things ready. You will naturally choose the best actors when you are giving a display. The class will not want it otherwise.

Programme for class performance for visitors

- (1) Qu'est-ce que c'est? with objects in the room.
- (2) Rhyme - Compter
- (3) Qu'est-ce que c'est? with parts of the body
- (4) Rhyme - Les Jours
- (5) Exchange of greetings in French

- (6) Play - The Animal Merchant (Le Marchand d'animaux)
- (7) Introductions in French
- (8) Giving directions in French
- (9) Song - Alouette
- (10) Play - Boule de neige
- (11) Rhyme - J'ai passé par la porte St. Denis
- (12) Prepositions - how we learn them
- (13) Song - Au clair de la lune
- (14) How we learn verbs
- (15) Play - Dans un restaurant
- (17) Simple Questioning in French
- (18) Play - Le Crime

The last item is always, I find, the pièce de résistance. It has been asked for by lecturers year in and year out.

All of this can be done in a 35-40 minute lesson and is a copy of an actual programme. When the class can do six or seven activities well, we have such a performance, even if it is only amongst ourselves.

Such procedures not only give the class pleasure. They give a sense of pride and achievement and promote a team spirit. Each one is anxious to give of his best for the sake of the reputation of the form. The enthusiasm this engenders has to be seen to be believed. And all the time they are learning to speak, act, and sing with ease and clarity in a foreign tongue.



## V (h)

USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA OF INSTRUCTION

The importance of audio-visual aids in language teaching has had such rapid growth in the last few years that no teacher can afford to ignore them. What are these media and what use can be made of them within a scheme of oral teaching such as we are advocating in this thesis? Such media are:

- A - Posters, Maps, Charts, colour-slides, and the like;
- B - Records, Songs, background music, speech records.
- C - Projects, Magazines, Scrap-books, Albums, etc.
- D - Mechanical aids which can be combined with A and B -  
Epivisor, Film-slide-strip projector, Record-player,  
Barclay Rear- Projection Screen.

Some of these lend themselves more readily to oral work than others, of course, but all are useful in stimulating an interest in the subject. I shall now comment on those that I find most useful for oral work. POSTERS To be of value, posters must have some bearing on the work of the class; their position must be changed frequently; they must reveal some particular characteristic of the people or country; they must be discussed by the teacher. At all levels they can be used for oral work, according to the capacity of the class. A map of Paris can be the starting point of a series of "promenades," illustrated by colour-slides, along the Seine, or from the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel to the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile; of a visit, for example, to the Louvre, or to L'Opéra, with slides to

illustrate the façade, the staircase, and a performance of Swan Lake given there.

With regard to MAGAZINES. The most useful work can be done with those magazines specially published for children. Of these the "Bonjour" and "Les Loisirs" series are excellent. They are attractively got up, the matter is varied and interesting, the vocabulary up-to-date, yet suited to the capacity of the children. They are cheap and the "Bonjour" series is available also on records costing only about 6/- each.

THE RECORD is a most useful teaching device. It can be used at any time convenient to the teacher or the learner. It can be stopped at any point for the teacher to ask questions, to comment and to clarify. It can be played over any number of times and can be heard in advance by the teacher and evaluated.

It is a medium that is under close control. I use it for dictées and songs where they have been recorded. It is thus made part of the ordinary class lesson and no extra time is spent with this device. I have mentioned elsewhere recordings made by the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney which I use.

The RADIO, accessible in home and school, is the most universal form of audio-communication. For use, the radio as a teaching device has one advantage only - the value of hearing another voice. The radio lesson, broadcast at a fixed time, does not always fit in with the modern language classes, which are held at different times in each school. The work covered in the lesson does not always fit in with the syllabus you are

following. The broadcaster does not see his class, consequently he cannot tell if any of his hearers are puzzled, or if any are not following. He cannot stop to explain. Unlike the gramophone, he cannot be made to repeat what he has said. If any member of the class is inattentive, there is no remedy. If any are bored, or their energies flag, nothing can be done. It requires highly concentrated attention, and it cannot be reviewed in advance.

FILM STRIPS of parts of France - famous provinces such as Normandy, France as a garden etc - are available for use in schools which have a projector. These are excellent vehicles for acquainting the pupils with the daily life of the people whose language is being studied. Any film is likely to have a powerful impact on the pupil because it appeals to the eye, ear and emotions. As the class is passive during the showing of such films, and as one frequently really has not the time to devote one whole lesson to the mere showing of films however valuable and interesting in themselves, I usually choose a dinner hour or some such convenient time in which to show these strips. The teacher then does not feel that the ordinary class work is being held up.

The device I find most useful and of which I make the most use, is the TAPE RECORDER. Tapes are practically indestructible. Recordings are easily made, they are portable, can be stored without difficulty and can be repeatedly relayed back with the same rhythm, phrasing and intonation. To save

carrying gramophone records about I take them off on to the tape recorder. Another advantage of this device is that one can record radio broadcasts and make fuller use of them for classroom teaching. Its great use, and one which has been the most stressed by writers of magazines and specialized papers, is to record the learner's voice while he speaks and then play it back for correction and criticism. But there are problems here of which such writers seem unaware. To use the tape recorder for this purpose with a large number of pupils is a waste of time, and to most of them of no interest. You will not be able to record many voices during the lesson. If only one or two pupils' voices are recorded and listened to, the rest of the form is not interested and cannot get much out of it. Care has to be taken in finding an appropriate text for the pupil to read in front of the microphone and in explaining it properly. If the same text is repeated by all the pupils, it will have little interest after the first few readings. If each pupil chooses the text he records, the rest of the form will still be uninterested. There will also be the danger of a bad choice. But it would be foolish indeed to refrain from using it for this purpose. For it is extremely valuable to the pupil to hear his own recording played back. The result is generally a twofold surprise to him. Firstly he will be very surprised at the sound of his own voice - it will sound as if spoken by a third person. Secondly he will the more readily be able to recognize mistakes in his own pronunciation

of which he has hitherto been unconscious. There is, however, a way out of the difficulty. Children can listen to the tape recorder by themselves out of school hours. All you have to do is to put a competent pupil in charge. It can be used by the pupil for recording his own repetitions of the model, and for subsequent comparison of original and repetition. The pupil will thus have his attention called to his errors in a way he will not be likely to forget. He is surprised when he hears himself as others hear him. There will always be some pupils free in the dinner hour and after school for a while. Thus all pupils should be able to use it this way and the objections mentioned above would no longer hold. The tape recorder, then, is a most useful device. It saves your carrying records which are easily broken; it enables you to make use, at your own time and convenience, of radio broadcasts which you can use to advantage in your own teaching, and it enables pupils to listen to their own mistakes and then correct them by subsequent comparison of the model with their own repetition.

Whenever any new device or much publicised aid appears, there will always be those who talk a good deal of nonsense about it, who make exaggerated claims for it, as if it were going to solve all our problems. We must never forget, however, that these aids are merely tools, and we must know when to use them.

M. Paul Feraud in "A report on Audio-visual Aids in the Teaching of Modern Languages" <sup>(1)</sup> says ... "audio-visual aids are

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(1) UNESCO THE TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES 1955, p.95

neither a panacea nor a poison. Like all man's works, they are both good and bad, and it is our responsibility to use them to achieve better results with less effort. In this they should be of assistance because they appeal both to the eye (visual memory) and to the ear (auditory memory). We, the teachers, will then have to appeal to the other types of memory and the cycle will be complete. Why, then, should we refuse the aid they offer?"

An EPIVISOR is a splendid aid, for it is a slide-projector and epidiascope in one, and it can take a 1000 watt lamp, which gives wonderful clarity. It has two drawbacks, however. It is too cumbersome for a classroom and the epidiascope part of it is not satisfactory in daylight. THE BARCLAY REAR-PROJECTION SCREEN is the only one that can be used effectively in the classroom without having to use dark curtains or screens to shut out the light. This screen is easy to move about and costs about £90 - well within reach of many schools. When you insert a slide which is shown to the class, at the same time this slide is projected to a screen at the back of the instrument and enables the teacher to stand by the screen, face the class, and yet see what the class is seeing. If you have a slide of one of the streets or cafés of Paris, you can frame your questions to the class in French and listen to their answer and at the same time see whether they are correct or no, without moving from your position in front. Slides which are cheap and of very good quality may be obtained from the Société Veronese

8 Rue du Conservatoire, Paris.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THESE MEDIA

(1) They help to create a cultural background which will lead pupils to a better understanding of and sympathy with the people of other lands.

(2) They are a means of helping to secure the survival of the teaching of modern languages in an age predominantly scientific, technological and attractive. Science telecasts sent out on the "University of the Air" programme from the University of Sydney in which the wonders of the world of the atom, the behaviour of light and so on are demonstrated, are fascinating; and it is no wonder this new field of research exercises such a powerful influence on the young people of to-day and on the framers of educational curricula. If the study of languages is to compete successfully against this strong pull towards the physical sciences, we must use everything that will stimulate an interest in foreign countries, their peoples and their languages. These media undoubtedly do this.

(3) In common with all other oral methods they help pupils to understand the language when spoken, read it with a certain amount of ease and pleasure, and speak it as well as possible when left within the bounds of their experience.

## VI (a)

VALUE OF METHODS(a) GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES LEARNT IN PLAYS

With constant repetition, fixed speech patterns are built into the child's mind. When the time comes to learn the grammatical reason or rule, its application is already in their consciousness and half the battle is won. They are already prepared for the rule.

In the plays I teach during the first year the following constructions are met with:-

C'EST: C'est mon argent; c'est un assassin; c'est votre revolver? C'est mon revolver; c'est un complot; c'est du chloroforme; ce n'est pas un compartiment de fumeurs; c'est bon; ce n'est pas cher; c'est ridicule; c'est drôle; c'est abominable; ce n'est pas vrai; c'est à moi; si ce n'est pas vous, Madame, c'est le facteur; c'est vendredi; c'est comme vos bottines.

IMPERATIVES: écoutez; cherchons; entrons; montre-moi; ouvre-la; chassons-le; chassons-les; donnez-le-moi dites-moi; donnez-moi un exemple.

PARTITIVE DE; il n'a pas de costume; une bouteille de poison; nous ne servons pas de viande; pas de viande, aujourd'hui, monsieur.

PERFECT TENSE; J'ai lu; je n'ai pas encore lu; vous n'avez pas encore lu? je n'ai pas échoué (all of these are in one play).



voilà

PRONOUNS; me voici; les voilàINFINITIVE AND POSITION OF PRONOUN: Je veux acheter un animal;

Il faut les jeter tout de suite; je vais vous raconter  
 une histoire; je vais recommencer; il faut  
 d'abord chercher partout; je ne peux pas le supporter;  
 il va nous chloroformer et nous assassiner  
 Voulez-vous tenir cet homme; je suis sûr d'avoir  
 passé mes examens.

DISJUNCTIVE PRONOUNS: moi aussi; moi, monsieur? il y a moi;

je n'ai pas peur du tout, moi.

NEGATIVES: ne ... pas with the perfect (above)

il n'y a rien, il n'y a personne.

VERBS TAKING A: Il ressemble à un criminel. À un assassin!

J'ai répondu à toutes les questions.

PHRASES: Au secours! Au voleur! par exemple! quelle idée!

quelle horreur! je veux bien; je veux dire;  
 que tu es sotte, Julie! encore un quart d'heure;  
 qu'est-ce qu'il y a? qu'y a-t-il pour votre service?  
 j'ai peur; il fait froid; j'aime beaucoup cet  
 animal; au-dessus de ta tête.

In Miss Buckle's "Second Book of French dialogues" which  
 I have previously mentioned graded grammar content is combined  
 with dramatic form. The first dialogues introduce the Perfect  
 tense, Perfects with "avoir", then Perfects with "être"; later  
 other tenses are gradually introduced. Points such as the use  
 of the Infinitive, Comparison, Negatives, Conditional sentences

are dealt with, and the vocabulary is extended, generally upon the "association of ideas" system. We shall give just one example of the skilful way in which the tenses are combined.

In the play "La leçon interrompue" we have

Jacques. Monsieur, vous savez que la rue est très étroite près de la pâtisserie? Eh bien, l'éléphant s'est arrêté là au beau milieu de la rue, et il n'a pas voulu bouger. 2<sup>e</sup> élève: Et vous n'avez pas pu passer, hein?

Jacques. Mais naturellement je n'ai pas pu passer. Une foule s'est assemblée. La circulation s'est arrêtée. Un agent est arrivé, et il a crié - il a voulu arrêter le propriétaire du cirque.

Enough has been said, we hope, to show the learning value of the use of plays. Apart from all the other points we have considered, the use of plays gives definite grammatical practice and facilitates grammatical learning. What it does in the way of vocabulary is too obvious to mention.

(b)

(b) SUMMARY OF THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THESE METHODS

One of the most important tasks in teaching, and at the same time one of the most difficult, is to make the student WANT to learn. One of the most powerful aids to providing motivation is ENJOYMENT. By using the methods and devices previously described, I have found that it is possible to make French really enjoyable. It is surely unnecessary to emphasize what a gain it is for the teacher if the class fall in love with a subject on first acquaintance. The first impression of a new subject may condition the child's attitude towards it for years.

PLAYS

The pedagogic value of plays has been recognised for centuries. They were used for educational purposes as far back as the time of the Greeks. In the schools of the Renaissance, Latin plays, especially those of Plautus and Terence, were used as a means of strengthening the spoken Latin. More effective use can be made of it to-day in modern languages. Especially in the case of beginners and younger children, it adds life, colour, and interest to the process of learning a language. Children are by nature inclined to express themselves through bodily activity and dramatic form. By using suitable plays as an aid to instruction, the teacher is taking advantage of this native tendency which is natural and satisfying to children. Plays include a large number of bodily movements - posture, facial expression, gesture, intonation and the interpretation of a special and particular role. The natural

bodily activity and make-believe of children in ordinary play is thus taken into the classroom and put to cultural purposes. The play, together with the memorization of songs and rhymes helps to build up a basic vocabulary which is not the mere accumulation of words. Plays provide for the use of the spoken language in a natural setting. They increase facility in the use of the spoken language, for the various expressions used are directly related to the situation. Gesture and posture unconsciously determine a person's intonation and speech pattern. These are largely neglected in a classroom where attempts to speak the language are often given in a dull monotone. Acting out a play adds that colour and warmth which are an essential part of oral intercourse in daily life. The fact that the children are emotionally involved with the characters and the various happenings, the language they use in relation to them will be imbued with a personal reality which is essential if it is to become their possession. They give training in self-discipline and co-operation and in working punctually and efficiently towards a clearly defined climax. They help to make school life more natural for the child who, most of the day, must sit at a desk, listening to lectures, writing in silence or answering questions in short, limited sentences. Plays bring freedom, both of imagination and of bodily movement into the classroom. "The ready mastery of phrase which conversation requires demands frequent repetition of the material in its spoken context; and it is difficult to see how else, without loss of interest, we can achieve this but by the rehearsal and

performance of plays and sketches" (W.H. Stott "Language Teaching in the New Education" Univ. of London Press, 1946 p.53)

SONGS, RHYMES, POETRY combine cultural value with enjoyment.

They are useful exercises for improving pronunciation and they increase vocabulary. Greater precision and distinctness are secured which carry over into the speech of the individual.

The beat, the rhythm and the pattern of the foreign language are the more easily and the more vividly impressed on the children.

QUESTIONS IN FRENCH, GIVING OF ORDERS, ETC. help us to ensure that our pupils are using the language as it is really used. They are enabled to master linguistic material in relation to a personal experience: to express something specific in relation to a specific situation. They get intensive practice in acquiring fundamental structures of the language, practice which is based on situations created in the classroom itself. By the simple conversations of the early lessons, by the first "Bonjour" or the first 'Comment allez-vous' we open a window on a new world. We give the child a change of environment. When the child can handle or point to the object as well as name it, open the door or window as well as say he is opening them, he acquires a new idea of the reality of language. These methods provide a verisimilitude of situation which makes for pleasant and effective learning. Moreover, they enable the learner to carry out much of the work. I have shown how frequently it is possible to permit a student to assume the direction of the class activities.

Permitting pupils to assume control of the situation gives them a feeling of power, satisfaction and pleasure. By acquiring a sense of being able to do something in the language makes them want to go on with what they think they are good at. In all schools you have dull children. Some are definitely non-linguistic. Some come from non-cultural homes. But such pupils can act. I recently had one particularly poor class where very few were even fairly good and where almost none had any real linguistic ability. Yet they all liked French and all looked forward to the French lesson. Moreover they turned out the best actors of all the French classes and their pronunciation was quite intelligible to foreign visitors to the school. With those boys it could truly be said in the words of Cloudesley Brereton "What a pleasure it is for a duffer to feel good at something." \*

Every pupil in the class can participate to some extent in the activities I have advocated. Without upsetting the class, without detriment to discipline, they provide for movement. No child is sitting on a hard seat in an unnatural position for a whole period.

Finally the whole scheme has a definite therapeutic value. Tensions arising from sitting in unnatural positions and from the artificial classroom situation are worked out of the system.

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\* CLOUDESLEY BRERETON: MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN DAY  
& EVENING SCHOOLS (Univ. of London press 1930 p.20.)

CONCLUSION

Surely it is not impracticable to believe that with constant practice the child can eventually achieve a sound, accurate knowledge of the spoken and written forms needed to express in simple language the everyday things and happenings that are within the field of his experience? Indeed, if we are to justify the inclusion of French in modern curricula, we must see that in the first years the basic structures of the language are mastered. We must also give our pupils as complete as possible a background of the culture of which it is a part. So many subjects compete for inclusion in the curricula of modern education, that we must ensure that the time spent on language learning results in a firm foundation on which the children themselves, later on, will be able to build. To lay this foundation properly, teachers must ensure that the child learns the forms and structures of everyday experience in situations in which they would naturally be used by those for whom it is the mother tongue. By using these oral methods and classroom procedures I have advocated, the teacher is not only presenting the child with such forms and structures used in meaningful situations, but is giving him constant practice in them. In time their use will become automatic, and correct patterns of language will be established in the child's mind. When that occurs those correct patterns, born of automatic use of particular instances, will emerge at the appropriate moment.

I have found that these oral methods enliven the whole subject by anticipation and reminiscence. They give a sense

of power and achievement that is precious, particularly to those not so gifted children who find most subjects difficult. They can be used everyday in the classroom without hindering or delaying prescribed courses, whether those courses aim predominantly at mastery of grammar, ability to read the literature, ability to express oneself correctly both by oral and written media, or all four together. They facilitate progress in that they promote the development of an open mind, that is, the desire for knowledge, without which any form of instruction would be in vain. And with their help an excellent foundation can be laid for those pursuing their studies further. Finally, those who study the subject for two years only, if they are taught by these methods, will have received some cultural value from the songs and poems; enjoyment and a certain fluency from the plays; from the whole, a sense of achievement and an interest in the foreign country; and a foundation will have been laid for sympathetic understanding of its customs and people.

Every teacher worthy of the name is particularly interested in some class problems of which he is still looking for a solution, or believes he has found it. To me, the crucial problem is that the results commonly achieved in modern language teaching are not commensurate with the time and energy expended. That is due, I maintain, to the following causes:

- (1) Lack of adequate motivation, particularly after the first year.



- (2) Failure to brighten instruction with drama, songs and other oral procedures.
- (3) Failure to make full use of mechanical teaching aids in an age predominantly scientific and technological.
- (4) Failure of a definite aim on the part of teachers of language.

I believe I have found a solution. This thesis is an attempt to present that solution. I do not claim that it is an infallible method or that it is the only method. It is what I have always found effective. It is at least a workable method. It provides the diffident, the hesitant, the non-specialist teacher, with a foundation upon which to experiment and to adapt to his own needs. A wise teacher will use the various methods any enthusiast advocates, but he will use them only insofar as he thinks he himself can use them successfully.

In presenting this method I make one claim only - that it DOES solve the problem of motivation.