



CALL FOR PAPERS
JOINT CONFERENCE OF
APHELLE, CIRSIL, HSS and SIHFLES

The Direct Method in language teaching
Granada (Spain), 16–17 May 2019



With the support of HoLLT.net (*AILA Research Network for the History of Language Learning and Teaching*), *Departamento de Filología Francesa* and *Departamento de Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura* (Universidad de Granada).

What exactly *is* the 'Direct Method'? In France, the chief inspector of modern languages Firmery answered this question in a very simple way in his 10 October 1902 article in the *Revue politique et parlementaire*: 'It is the method by which one teaches a language directly, that is, without the intermediary of the mother tongue' (in Rochelle 1906: 4; our translation)

In the 1880s a strong movement for reform of modern language teaching arose, principally in Germany and Scandinavia, with the addition of France at the beginning of the 20th century. The starting point for this renewal can be seen to have been the call made by Wilhelm Viëtor in 1882, under the pseudonym *Quousque Tandem*, in his manifesto *Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren* ('Language Teaching Must Change Direction!'). In 1886 the German Association of Modern Language Teachers was founded; in 1886, also, a group of Scandinavian teachers created a society to promote reform ideas. Similar associations were created across Europe: in France, the *Association des Professeurs de Langues vivantes* (APLV) and the *Société des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes de l'Enseignement Public*; in Britain, the *Société Nationale des Professeurs de français*; in Belgium the *Union des professeurs de langues modernes*, and so on.

Within these Associations, which published their own bulletins, organised conferences and took up positions in journals, there was a fertile debate in the 1880s, through which a new methodological path for the teaching/learning of living languages gradually became clear.

A number of studies of the Direct Method (henceforth, DM) have been published: one of the first was (in 1935), the thesis by Loretta C. Duffy titled 'The Direct Method in the Teaching of French' (Loyola University, Chicago). Indeed, there seems to have been a renewal of interest over the last thirty years; mention might be made here of the central place held by 'direct methodology' in Christian Puren's *Histoire des méthodologies* (1988 : 94-207); research on the debates on DM within the German Association of Modern Language Teachers between 1886 and 1914 (Herbert Christ, 1990); on the teaching of phonetics (cf. Elisabet Hammar 1997, 1998; or Enrica Galazzi, 1991); the transfer of the pedagogical know-how of DM to the *Philosophical Investigations* of Wittgenstein (Bouquet, 1999); the 'archeology' of DM (that is, the teaching techniques most characteristic of the Direct Method that were not only practised but recommended well before this method emerged as such (Henri Besse, 2012); the Reform Movement and DM in Germany (Marcus Reinfried, 1999)); the beginnings of DM in the USA, with Lambert Sauveur (Irene Finotti, 2010, 2013); the teaching of grammar in DM (in textbooks published in Turkey (Erdogan Kartal, 2014)); and the use of songs (in textbooks published in Germany (Andreas Rauch, 2015)). In this overview we must give a privileged place to the six volumes of *Foundations of Foreign Language Teaching* (A. P. R. Howatt & Richard Smith, 2000) and five volumes of *Modern Language Teaching. The Reform Movement* (A. P. R. Howatt & Richard Smith, 2002).

There have been many other allusions to DM in studies devoted to the historiography of modern language teaching in Europe, in the case of Belgium (Berré, 2001), Spain (Fernández Fraile, 1996), Germany (among others, the thesis of M. Reinfried, 1990, devoted to the history of the image in the teaching of foreign languages), and so on. And there are certainly others we have neglected to mention here.

However, even if the works relating to DM are quite numerous, they mainly concern partial aspects: precursors (Lambert Sauveur, François Gouin, the Reform Movement in Germany...), the approaches and techniques of teaching, and so on, without a global overview having been undertaken on an international scale to understand the magnitude of "this rich adventure [...] which either confronted or raised all the current questions of modern foreign language didactics" (Puren, 1988: 191, our translation). DM represents a

methodological current that deserves to be explored in a systematic way, as much with regard to the theoretical issues it raises (psychological, linguistic or pedagogical theories on which it was based) as in relation to the many achievements of authors, in many countries, over a long period (1880–1940, and even beyond: indeed, some textbooks of the DM continue to be published these days (thus, *French for All: By the Direct Method*, Noëlia Dubrule, 1921, was reissued by Fb & C Limited in 2016).

Many possible focuses for research can be envisaged:

1. The social, political and economic factors influencing this methodological renewal (revolution?) in Europe and beyond
2. The contributions of nineteenth-century scientific research (positivism; associationism in psychology; phonetic research, itself revolutionised by the invention of the Edison phonograph; the creation of the IPA; theories of W. von Humboldt and naturalist conceptions in linguistics), as mediated by the proposals of linguists / foreign language teachers such as Wilhem Viëtor, Otto Jespersen, Henry Sweet, Paul Passy, Harold E. Palmer, Henri Laudenbach, Georges Delobel, F. Collard, Charles Schweitzer, E. Rochelle, E. Dodeman ...; or proposals for the creation of international languages (e.g. Volapük, Schleyer, 1879; Esperanto, Zamenhof, 1887).
3. The relationship of DM with contemporary pedagogical movements: attempts to reform orthography by the "Sociétés de Réforme Orthographique"; new proposals for learning to read; movements of renewal in favor of active methods (Demolins, Pestalozzi, Montessori, Decroly, continuing Basedow's legacy).
4. The discussions on DM at the International Congresses of Modern Language Teaching held at the time (among others in Paris, 1900); the Congresses of the *Société Nationale des Professeurs de français en Angleterre* (SNPFA); the Congresses of the *Association des professeurs de langues vivantes* (Ghent, 1906; Liege, 1909; Brussels, 1911), etc.
5. Relationships of DM with contemporary educational journals, including, among others, the following: in Germany, *Neuphilologisches Centralblatt* (edited by ADNv), *Die Neueren Sprachen*, and, after 1902, the *Zeitschrift für französischen und englischen Unterricht*; in Sweden, the professional journal *Verdandi*; in Italy, the *Bolletino di Filologia Moderna*; in France, the *Revue de l'Enseignement des Langues vivantes*, *Les langues modernes* (organ of the APLV), the *Bulletin de la Société pour la propagation des langues vivantes en France* (organ of the SPLEF); in Spain, the *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza* ...
6. Precursors of DM or relationships with other contemporary "methods", such as the Gouin and Le Roy series method, Lambert Sauveur's natural method, the "méthode maternelle" of Irénée Carré.
7. The countries and learners concerned, and the periods when the DM was applied (including Irénée Carré's maternal method, applied for the teaching of French in Lower Brittany, in areas of France where the population did not speak or spoke only a little French, or in the French colonies (see *Revue pédagogique*, 1888)).
8. The authors and their productions (textbooks), the specific characteristics of these, the approaches (direct, active, oral, interrogative, intuitive ...) and the techniques employed (phonetic transcription, for example), the supplementary resources used (wall charts, songs, pictures, etc.). It is necessary to contextualize these approaches and techniques: refusing use of the mother tongue (L1) in teaching a second or foreign language is a *methodological* option only when there is the possibility of doing otherwise (when the teacher faces students who speak different L1s, or when the teacher does not know the L1 of the students, it can be seen more as a necessity than a didactic choice).
9. The way DM was introduced via curricula and syllabuses in various countries in Europe and beyond (United States, Turkey, Russia ...); didactical orientations of educational authorities in different countries.

"Direct Method" or "direct methodology"?

The term that appears in the title of this call for papers – "Direct Method" – is preferred to "direct methodology" if only to respect the meaning that these two terms had at the time when the Direct Method was implemented in language teaching in Europe (1880–1940). We thus adopt the definitions proposed by Henri Marion in the *Nouveau dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire*, edited under the direction of Ferdinand Buisson (Paris, Hachette, 1911, our translation):

Method. "This term, formed from a Greek word whose root means "way", signifies all the ways and means that are adopted, in an intentional and reflective manner, to accomplish any task or carry out any enterprise."

Methodology. "By this name, in Belgium and French Switzerland, is meant that part of the science of education which the Germans call *Methodik*, and which is defined in the programme of the Prussian Normal Schools as "the special science of teaching")."

Overall, it is clear that, even though the history of DM has been investigated from monographic and national perspectives, it has been less studied from an international point of view, during a time period (1880–1940) when nationalisms triumphed in Europe with the consequences we know. The main objective of the conference is to fill this and other research gaps.

Relevant dates

Symposium dates: Thursday 16th and Friday 17th May, 2019

Deadline for submission of proposals: January 15th, 2019

Notification of accepted proposals: February 15th, 2019

Submission of proposals

Paper proposals, in French or English, should not exceed 500 words, including bibliography (5 references max.). Up to five keywords should be provided. Proposals should be sent to: jsuso@ugr.es and valdes@ugr.es

Proposals should contain the name of the author and his/her affiliation.

Papers

The organisers will attempt to avoid parallel sessions. Length of presentation: 20 minutes + 10 minutes of questions and answers. Papers can be presented in French or English.

Registration fees

Members of APHELLE, CIRSIL, HSS, SIHFLES : 60,00 €

Others: 70,00 €

PhD students: € 20.00

Registration fees cover coffee breaks, two lunches and the receipt of documents related to the conference (programmes, badges, certificates, etc.).

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