

# Building Common Knowledge in Language Teaching Mini-Workshop

## Terms and Concepts in the Field of Language Teaching

Trainer: Laura Pachter (Director of Professional Development)

Let us start with a few quotes about language, language teaching and language learning ...

“Any time you think some other language is **strange**, remember that yours is just as strange, you’re just used to it.”

– Anonymous

“Language is not a genetic gift, it is a **social** gift. Learning a new language is becoming a member of the club -the community of speakers of that language.”

(Frank Smith is a contemporary British psycholinguist internationally recognized for his contributions in linguistics and cognitive psychology. He was educated at Harvard University)

“Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to **think** about things.” (Flora Lewis was an American journalist born in Los Angeles. She died in Europe)



What is **your** language story? Which language/s did you listen to and learn growing up? Did your family move to a country where a different language was spoken? Was more than one language spoken at home?

## Some factors that have influenced language teaching trends in the past and can be expected to continue to do so in the future

- *Government policy directives*: for decades, increased demands for accountability on the part of funding agencies and governments have driven some of the educational changes. Some examples of top-down influences on language teaching are the standards movement, a focus on competencies in language programs, and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)
- *Trends in the profession*: professional certification for teachers, endorsement of particular areas or approaches by professional organizations and lobby groups promoting particular causes
- *Beliefs and practices in educational issues*: influence of powerful individual practitioners with their own schools of thoughts and their followers, such as Gattegno (the Silent Way) and Krashen (the Natural Approach) in the 1980s, and Gardner (Multiple Intelligences) in the 1990s, to mention a few
- *Responses to technology*: technological innovations have influenced and will continue to influence both the content and the form of instructional delivery in language teaching
- Influences from academic disciplines: As new theories emerge in linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and psychology, they are likely to have an impact on future theories of teaching and learning and play a dominant role in shaping language pedagogy
- *Second language acquisition research*: it will continue to motivate new language teaching approaches
- *Crossover educational trends*: Cooperative Language Learning, Whole Language and Multiple Intelligences represent crossovers into second language teaching of movements from general education
- *Crossovers from other disciplines*, such as human engineering, ethnography, psychotherapy, and communication science illustrate how these diverse disciplines can influence the field of language teaching



Think of your experiences as a **language learner**: What have you accomplished? What challenges did you face? Do you recall any anecdotes? What insight have you gained when you became a language teacher/learner?

## Foreign Language Demo Lesson

We will be exposed to a quick mini-lesson in a European language.



After the lesson, let's discuss the following questions and let's share some thoughts

- What **techniques** did the instructor use?
- What was **effective**?
- How did the instructor check and monitor **comprehension**?
- What was the **role of the instructor**?
- What was the **role of the learner**?

## Building background knowledge on language teaching

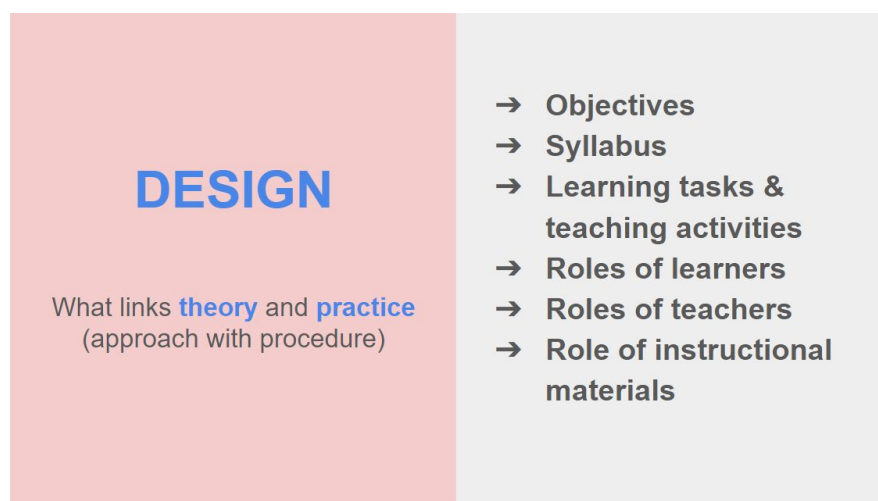
### Naturalistic Principles of language teaching and language learning

19th century: Reform movement as a reaction to Grammar-Translation Method: Gouin in France attempted to build a methodology around the observation of child language learning turning his attention to naturalistic principles of language learning. Those who believed in the Natural Approach argued that a foreign language could be taught without translation or the use of the mother tongue if meaning was conveyed directly through demonstration and action, making second language learning more like first language learning. A monolingual approach to teaching, encouraging direct and spontaneous use of the foreign language in the classroom.

### The nature of approaches and methods in language teaching

A scheme was proposed by the American applied linguist Edward Anthony in 1963. He identified 3 levels of conceptualization and organization:

- **Approach**: axiomatic: it describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. Philosophy or belief system dealing with the nature of language, teaching and learning
- **Method**: procedural. Overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material based on selected approach
- **Technique**: that which actually takes place in a classroom. Tricks or stratagems used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well



**Language teaching methodology** has to do with methods, techniques, and procedures for teaching and learning in the classroom.

**Curriculum development** encompasses the complex process of creating a syllabus, identifying appropriate methodological tasks along with assessment and evaluation instruments, and integrating all of the procedures and instruments in the creation of courses and programs.

**Syllabus design** deals with the selection, sequencing, integrating and justifying of content. Syllabus design focuses on content which deals not only with what to teach, but also with the order in which the content is taught and the reasons for teaching this content to our learners.

**Methodology** is “The study of the practices and procedures used in teaching, and the principles and beliefs that underlie them” (Richards *et al.* 1987)

**Assessment** is concerned with how well students have done. **Evaluation** is broader than assessment and is concerned with how well our program or course has served the learners.

## **Building common knowledge in the field of language teaching terminology**

- **Eclectic method:** a method that draws on a range of other methods and approaches that fits the pedagogical context and the teacher’s style as well as learners’ strategy preferences, rather than adhering rigidly to a set of prescriptive principles
- **information gap task:** pedagogical tasks in which learners have unequal access to information that has to be shared in order for a task to be completed successfully.

- **metalinguage**: language about language, for example technical terms for describing pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse
- **scaffolding**: providing a supporting framework to facilitate a learning task or activity. For example, a listening task might be supported with a list of key vocabulary.
- **validity**: in language assessment, when an assessment item mirrors one of the goals of a course, we say that the item has validity
- **reliability**: in language testing, this refers to consistency. If the test yields the same results when administered to the same student on different occasions, or if it yields the same results if scored by different markers, then it is deemed to be reliable
- **formative & summative assessment**
  - Formative assessment: assessment carried out during the course. It is designed to give feedback to the learners on strengths and weaknesses as the course progresses, rather than providing a final grade or report at the end of the course
  - Summative assessment: assessment carried out at the end of a course, usually to provide a record of achievement or some form of certification or completion

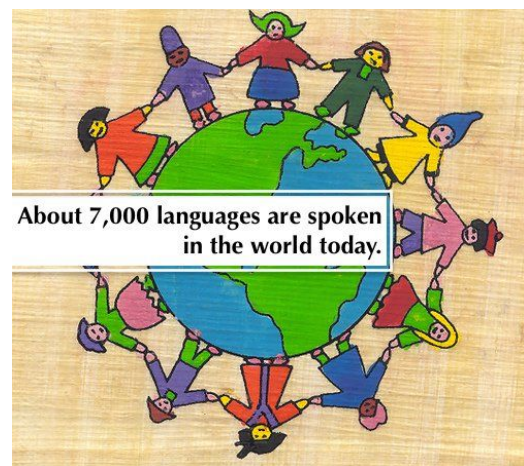
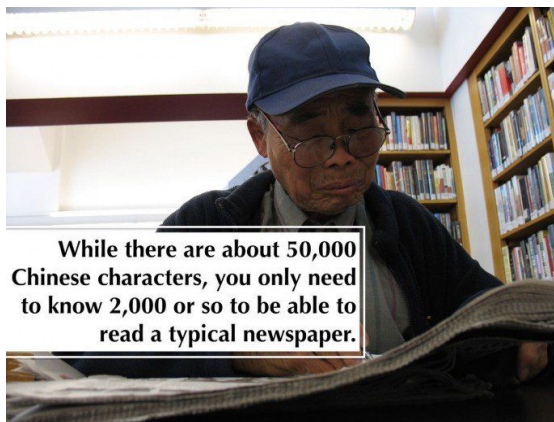
## Language Trivia

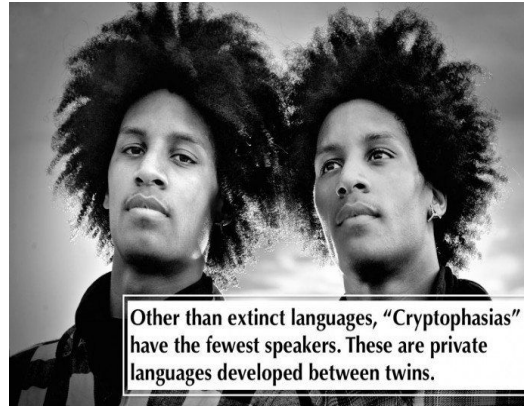
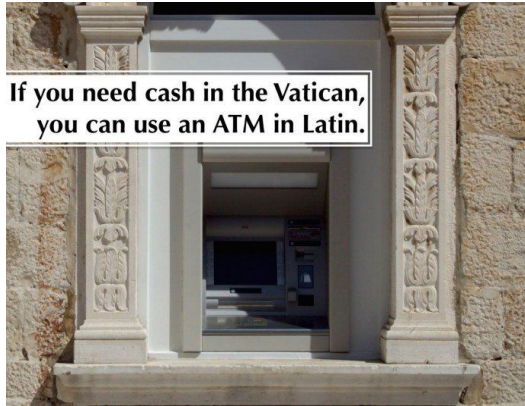
1. Number of living languages
2. Number of those languages that are nearly extinct
3. Language with the greatest number of native speakers
4. Language spoken by the greatest number of non-native speakers
5. Country with the most languages spoken
6. First language ever written
7. Oldest written language still in existence
8. Language with the most words
9. The most widely published language
10. Language with the fewest irregular verbs
11. Language which has won the most Oscars
12. The most translated document
13. The most common consonant sounds in the world's languages

## The answers are for your information after group discussion and educated guesses during the workshop

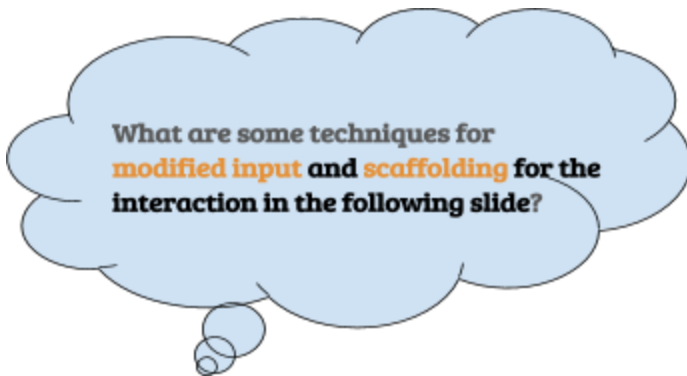
1. Number of living languages: **6912**
2. Number of those languages that are nearly extinct: **516**
3. Language with the greatest number of native speakers: **Mandarin Chinese** [See [Top 30 languages](#)]
4. Language spoken by the greatest number of non-native speakers: **English** (250 million to 350 million non-native speakers)
5. Country with the most languages spoken: **Papua New Guinea** They claim 840 living languages. [See [Top 20 countries](#)]
6. First language ever written: **Sumerian or Egyptian** (about 3200 BC)
7. Oldest written language still in existence: **Chinese or Greek** (about 1500 BC)
8. Language with the most words: **English**, approx. 250,000 distinct words
9. The most widely published language: **English**
10. Language with the fewest irregular verbs: **Esperanto** (none)
11. Language which has won the most Oscars: **Italian** (12 Academy Awards for Best Foreign Film)
12. The most translated document: **Universal Declaration Of Human Rights**, written by the United Nations in 1948, has been translated into 321 languages and dialects.
13. The most common consonant sounds in the world's languages: **/p/, /t/, /k/, /m/, /n/**

## Interesting facts about languages in the world





For discussion...



*How Languages are Learned*, Nina Spada and Patsy Lightbown, 1993, OUP, pg.24

Some background information on **modified input**

**Interactional Theory:** this theory argues that learning is an interactive process and depends on learners working together to achieve mutual understanding. A key concept is the negotiation of meaning: the modification of input learners receive when they communicate with more advanced learners or native speakers and the feedback they receive. Modified input facilitates both understanding and learning. These processes in a sense “teach” the language.

### Examples of input modification

- Using known vocabulary
- Speaking more slowly
- Paraphrasing
- Avoiding idioms
- Using stress on key words
- Repeating key elements
- Simplifying grammar



### Famous Pairs

- **declarative & procedural knowledge:**
  - declarative knowledge is knowledge that can be explicitly stated, it is “knowing that”. In language learning, for example, it is the ability to state a grammatical rule
  - procedural knowledge is knowing how to do things, it is the ability to use the rule correctly and appropriately for communication. First language speakers who are not linguists typically have procedural knowledge of their first language but not declarative knowledge
- **receptive & productive skills** (implication for first and second language acquisition and for inlingua)
  - Receptive skills: listening and reading
  - Productive skills: speaking and writing



- **deductive & inductive teaching/learning**
  - Deductive teaching/learning: A teaching/learning procedure in which a teacher, textbook, or other source explains a rule or principle and then learners complete exercises to apply and consolidate the rule
  - Inductive teaching/learning: a teaching/learning procedure in which learner study sentences, texts, or other pieces of language data and derive a rule or principle which they articulate and then apply
  
- **descriptive/prescriptive grammar**
  - Descriptive grammars seek to describe and explain language as it is actually used by speakers
  - Prescriptive grammars set out rules of “correctness” specifying how grammar items should be used. These rules are sometimes at odds with the ways in which speakers actually use language

## What do these acronyms mean?

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**TESL:** Teaching English as a Second Language

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**TEFL:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language

**ELT:** English Language Training (includes EFL and ESL)

**ESOL:** English to Speakers of Other Languages

**TESOL:** Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

**CELTA:** Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**ESP:** English for Specific Purposes

**EAP:** English for Academic Purposes

**EOP:** English for Occupational Purposes

**ELL:** English Language Learner

**L1:** first language, native language, mother tongue

**L2:** second language

**NS:** native speaker

**NNS:** non-native speaker

**NES:** non-English speaker

**LES:** limited English speaker

**PES:** proficient English speaker

## Highlights from the 2014 TESOL International Convention

- The importance of English as the international language of commerce and culture
- The number of English language learners worldwide is up to 1.5 billion
- "English is more than a commodity. It has the power to transform nations."
- The demand for qualified English instructors worldwide is astronomical and continues to grow

## Sources

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- Zuniga Dunlap Carmen, *Helping English Language Learners Succeed*, Second Edition, Shell Education, 2015
- Sousa David, *How the ELL Brain Learns*, Corwin, 2011
- Lightbown Patsy and Spada Nina, *How Languages are Learned*, OUP, 1993
- [Top 10 Funniest Language Learning Scenes](#)
- [Language Trivia by vistawide](#)
- [Fun facts about languages by twentytwowords](#)