Methods in Language Teaching: Do We Still Need Them?

Krystyna Droździał-Szelest

Abstract The present article focuses on the concept of a language teaching method, considered by many the most crucial notion in language education. Methods have had a long history in language teaching due to the widespread belief that it is possible to establish a set of procedures (= a method) which, when implemented in an expert way in the classroom, would inevitably lead to successful language learning. Therefore, many generations of teachers have found the notion attractive, turning to it in the hope of finding solutions to problems they encounter in everyday teaching. Additionally, for many teachers, especially novices, the concept of a method provided a safe frame of reference. However, with different methods coming into fashion, gaining and losing favor, it became apparent with time that none of the methods proposed could guarantee success for all learners. It is hardly surprising then, that the end of the twentieth century witnessed a move away from methods, at least at the theoretical level, and the beginning of the so-called post-method era in language education. As there has been quite a lot of confusion and misunderstanding surrounding language teaching methods, the aim of this article is to reexamine their role in contemporary language education.

1 Introduction

It is difficult, if not impossible, to envisage any serious discussion on language teaching today without references being made to the concept of a *method*. For many years the concept was considered fundamental due to a popular belief that it was possible to establish a direct link between the learners' achievements in the target language and the method used by the teacher in the classroom. In other words, it can be said that for a considerable period of time language teaching methods were at the heart of language teaching methodology, they were perceived as frameworks for classroom practice, providing teachers both with theoretical

K. Droździał-Szelest (✉)
Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Al. Niepodleglosci 4,
61-874 Poznan, Poland
e-mail: krysiad@wa.amu.edu.pl; krysiad@amu.edu.pl

foundations and guidelines for teaching, which, if strictly adhered to, would result in successful development of the target language competence of all learners.

The history of language education, as depicted by various authors, appears as a succession of different methods, with each new method making claims to have found a solution to the problems the profession was struggling with. It can be said without much exaggeration that over the centuries the quest has been going on for the best/perfect method of language teaching, the method that would make it possible for all learners to succeed in their endeavor, independent of the learning/teaching circumstances. The quest (or as some would say, the preoccupation with methods) became stronger in the twentieth century, especially in its second half, when a lot of new, more modern and, supposedly, more effective methods came into being, supplanting their seemingly discredited or simply outdated predecessors (cf. Titone 1968; Howatt and Widdowson 2004). Much throughout its earlier history (prior to the twentieth century) foreign language teaching had been rather limited in scope, with languages being taught almost exclusively by means of the so called *traditional* or *classical methods*, deriving directly from the teaching of classical languages (i.e. Greek and Latin). The new methods that appeared later on can be interpreted as a response to and a result of changing demands on language education, generated in turn by the changing circumstances (e.g. social, economic, political or educational), on the one hand, and changes in relevant theories (i.e. of the nature of language and of language learning), on the other (cf. Stern 1983, p. 452, 471; Richards and Rodgers 2001, p. 3). There seems, however, to be yet another important reason behind the changes, pointed out by Widdowson, who perceives emerging methods as different ways of addressing two fundamental questions in language pedagogy: one of them relating to the definition of purpose, i.e. "what kind of language knowledge or ability constitutes the goals that learners are to achieve at the end of the course", and the other concerning the process of learning, "(…) what kind of student activity is effective as the means to that end". In his opinion, "the history of English language teaching can be seen as a succession of different ways of conceptualizing purpose and process, and crucially, how they relate to each other" (2004, p. 353). His views echo the ones voiced by Richards and Rodgers who stated that "changes in language teaching methods throughout history have reflected recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency learners need" (2001, p. 3).

It was not until the second half of the twentieth century, with its already mentioned spectacular abundance of a range of methodological proposals, that the so-called 'method-consciousness' developed (cf. Titone 1968, p. 4). Accordingly, the new proposals were given a warm welcome by many, but also continued to be viewed with skepticism, especially as the new methods, based on scientific theories of language and established learning theories, claimed universality and promised success irrespective of other factors. Hence, the 1960s of the last century witnessed a number of large scale studies conducted to compare the efficacy of the new methods in relation to more traditional ways of teaching as well as to find out which of the methods proposed was the most effective, 'the best'. The methods were studied, described, classified, and compared in terms of their

proclaimed superiority over other methods. They were at the heart of language teaching, with language educators attempting to solve the problems of language teaching and learning by focusing their attention solely on the concept of a method (cf. Stern 1983). Such an increased interest in as well as high expectations connected with language teaching methods, however, soon led to some problems with the 'method' construct itself. Since the end of the twentieth century in particular, there have been quite a lot of controversies surrounding the concept, with both theorists and practitioners recognizing some of its inherent problems. As a result, methods have been widely criticized, their decline or even death has been proclaimed, at least at the theoretical level, and many researchers have come with some new solutions. With so much confusion and misunderstanding surrounding the concept of a *method*, the rationale behind this paper is to re-examine the notion from the point of view of its usefulness for the language teaching profession today. The paper will examine such issues as the rationale behind the idea of the quest for the best method, problems with the definition of a method, as well as alternatives to this concept. The purpose of the following discussion is to answer the question whether there is still a place for methods in language education, and if so, what we need them for.

2 The Method Era: The Quest for the 'Best Method'

As has been stated in the introduction, throughout much of its history language teaching was conceptualized in terms of language teaching methods (cf. Kelly 1969) or even "dominated by the 'method' construct" (Ellis 1992, p. 4). The belief that the teaching method was the most important factor (Allwright and Bailey (1991, p. xvii) and that "improvements in language teaching will result from improvements in the quality of methods, and, that ultimately an effective language teaching method will be developed" (Richards 1990, p. 35) was common both among academics and practicing teachers (see also Nunan 1991).

Together with the growing interest in languages in the second half of the twentieth century, the need to improve language teaching became urgent and the quest for the 'best' method began. It is the period from the 1950s to the 1980s that is believed to have been the most active as far as methods are concerned. It witnessed the emergence of a number of methods, some of which were recognized practically all over the world (e.g. the Audio-Lingual method and Communicative Language Teaching), whereas others were rather limited in their reception and use (e.g. the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach) (cf. Larsen-Freeman 2000; Richards and Rodgers 2001). The new methods, based on the findings of modern linguistics and psychology of the times rather than being "conventional routines", based on the experience or "the so-called 'common sense' of the individual teacher" (Titone 1968, p. 97), claimed superiority over traditional methods and promised success for all learners, irrespective of the context of instruction. In the 1970s there was a lot of confidence

in those new, scientifically-based methods, and, accordingly, teacher training was dominated by a "prescriptive approach", manifesting itself in trying to answer the question "which of the major competing methods" novice teachers should follow (Allwright and Bailey 1991, p. 7). Initially, it was expected that an answer to this question would be found in the analyses of the major teaching methods. It was with this purpose that a number of research projects were carried out, among them the famous Pennsylvania project and Scherer and Wertheimer's study, both comparing the effectiveness of the Audio-Lingual method with the more traditional ways of teaching. In both cases, the results turned out to be inconclusive and disappointing; the researchers did not find any significant differences pointing to a superiority of either method. Additionally, as Allwright and Bailey report, the results of the Pennsylvania study were "personally traumatic to the project staff", who expected "a clear superiority for the audiolingualism, but instead found no significant differences on several measures, and superiority of the traditional method on traditional measures of reading skill" (1991, p. xvii, 7). What is more, a number of other studies (e.g. the GUME project) provided similar inconclusive results, leading researchers to a conclusion that global methodological prescriptions do not make sense, since "no one single method could be superior to other methods in an absolute way" (1991, p. 9).

However, some other studies carried out at that time, did show significant differences in the results obtained, thus pointing to methodology is an important factor. Summing up his review of available research on methods, Hammerly concludes that the studies showed that "what is emphasized is learned best" (i.e. in a study comparing the effectiveness of the audio-lingual method against traditional (grammar-translation) method, the audio-lingual students "were markedly superior in listening and speaking", whereas the traditional students were superior in reading and writing, and additionally, translation) (1982, pp. 635–638). At the same time, the studies comparing the effectiveness of methods "have shown little or no difference in the results obtained with different methods" (1982, p. 218) In general, it did not seem to matter which method was used. Thus, as Allwright and Bailey suggest, methods do matter, but only to the extent that they make "a real difference to what actually happens in the classroom" (1991, p. vii). It seems only apt to end this part of the discussion with the following quotation: "the quest for the perfect teaching method seems to have been a vain one, and, in the light of the fact that learners of languages vary in so many ways and are affected by so many social and psychological factors, it seems to have been doomed from the very start" (Toney 1983, p. 352).

It comes as no surprise that together with the disappointment resulting from the studies testing the efficacy of different methods a move away from the methods concept could be observed together with their importance being degraded. At the same time, however, the studies drew attention to some problems inherent in the concept itself as well as some important issues related to its understanding and applications in the classroom context. As Hammerly points out, the studies themselves suffered from serious flaws, as they did not take into consideration the fact that teachers involved in the experiments did not actually follow the classroom procedures they

were supposed to adhere to; additionally, they seemed to rely on common teaching practice (1982, p. 218; 1985). According to some early studies even teachers specifically trained in the use of a particular method in the classroom applied a range of tasks and activities going beyond the method in question (Nunan 1991, p. 3). An attempt to explain the problems involved in language teaching methods was undertaken by Kumaravadivelu (2006) who refers to what he calls *the myth of method*. In his opinion, over the years a number of views have been formulated which, together with the ambiguous use of the term 'method', eventually led to the disillusionment with the concept and the gradual decline of methods. Among those, the following seem to be of importance (Kumaravadivelu 2006, pp. 162–168):

1. "there is a best method out there ready and waiting to be discovered";
2. "method constitutes the organizing principle for language teaching"—it can be used to cater to various learning and teaching needs, wants and situations;
3. "method has a universal and ahistorical value"—it can be used anywhere and everywhere; founded on "idealized concepts geared towards idealized contexts", methods are removed from classroom reality (a one-size-fits-all approach);
4. "theorists conceive knowledge, and teachers consume knowledge"—there exists a noticeable division between theory and practice, with teachers ("an underprivileged class of practitioners") following blindly what has been offered by theorists ("a privileged class").

Another crucial issue concerns the lack of agreement among researchers as to what constitutes *the best method*. Over the years there have been some noticeable changes in the way the concept has been perceived. For instance, Titone (1968, p. 111) believes that in order to really progress in language teaching we need methods "derived from (1) a scientific linguistic and anthropological analysis of language in general and of the specific language to be taught, (2) a psychological analysis of the process of second-language learning, (3) a definition of the specific objectives to be attained by a particular course of language study, and (4) the results of both a general theory of teaching experience and experimentation in foreign language teaching (historical and experimental dimensions)".

In trying to answer the question whether there actually is 'the best method', Hammerly refers to Stevick (1976) in whose opinion different language teaching methods can produce good results, as there is something good in most methods. What also needs to be emphasized, however, is the role of "highly qualified teachers" (1982, p. 269) who, while following the method's principles, are at the same time able to take on-the-spot decisions based on a careful analysis of their classrooms. Hammerly believes that under such circumstances "it is neither practical nor necessary to talk about a single, one and only best method" because "all methods must fit specific goals"; thus "(…) the best method for any set of goals is that method which most successfully reaches the agreed-upon goals" (1982, p. 270). He explains further that as there are certain general goals that must be reached by all the students, and certain general learner characteristics, "logic tells us that there must be a best way whereby most students can attain those goals. There may

be several good ways, but only one best way, and this best way is most likely to be one that combines the best that other ways have to offer" (1982, p. 270). In his book he specifies the characteristics that such a method should have (1982: 270–71, 641–644). These are further elaborated upon in his other publication (e.g. Hammerly 1985).

Prabhu (1990, pp. 161–176), on the other hand, claims that there is no such a thing as the best method and offers three possible ways to explain this statement, based on a broad interpretation of the term *method*:

- different methods are best for different teaching contexts;
- all methods are partially true or valid;
- the notion of good and bad methods is itself misguided

As far as the *no best method option* is concerned, Prabhu is convinced that "(…) we have no adequate notion of what 'best' might mean"; thus, in his view, the very notions of 'good' and 'bad' need to be redefined first. He goes on to explain that by the best method he means "the method that yields the best results in terms of learning outcomes", and, accordingly, "teaching methods should be judged by the amount of learning they can lead to, in a given period of time" (1990, p. 168). This, in turn, would require detailed comparisons of methods together with a careful quantification of learning outcomes, which are only achievable as a result of well-designed, controlled experiments. Such objective evaluation, in his opinion, is unfortunately, difficult to implement. He is against regarding professional efforts "as a search for the best method which, when found, will replace all other methods" and advocates looking at teaching as an "activity whose value depends centrally on whether it is informed or uninformed by the teacher's sense of plausibility" (to what degree it is 'real' or mechanical). In this sense, "a method is seen simply as a highly developed and highly articulated sense of plausibility, with a certain power to influence other specialists' or teachers' perceptions. Perhaps the best method varies from one teacher to another, but only in the sense that it is best for each teacher to operate with his or her own sense of plausibility at any given time" (1990, p. 175).

As can be seen from the above discussion, the large scale research studies carried out in the second half of the twentieth century, focused mainly on the search for the best method. At the same time, however, they provided both researchers and practitioners with valid information concerning the concept of a method and its practical applications.

3 The Concept of a *Method* in Language Teaching: Definitions and Problems

As has already been pointed out, the method debate, although inconclusive and disappointing in itself, brought into focus some important issues related to the concept of the method as well as its understanding. As Kumaravadivelu explains, the

word *method* derives from a Greek word *methodos* and it means "a series of steps leading towards a conceived goal", "a planned way of doing something" (2006, p. 162). In the field of language teaching, together with an increased interest in language teaching methods, there appeared a need to clarify different terms and concepts, especially as the research results pointed to some serious problems with the way that the construct was understood and used. Richards and Rodgers note that in the past, when "linguists and language specialists sought to improve the quality of language teaching (…), they often did so by referring to general principles and theories concerning how languages are learned, how knowledge of language is represented and organized in memory, or how language itself is structured" (2001, p. 18). Accordingly, "in describing methods, the difference between a philosophy of language teaching at the level of theory and principles, and a set of derived procedures for teaching a language, is central" (2001, p. 19). As a result, the concept of a method cannot be considered in isolation from other concepts crucial to understanding the relationships between different levels of language teaching.

One of the first attempts to establish a sound theoretical framework clarifying the difference between the existing notions, specifying the relationships with the theory and its applications in the classroom as well as introducing some order came from Anthony, who in 1963 proposed his own 'pedagogical filing system' with three basic terms, namely *approach, method*, and *technique* (Allen and Campbell 1972, p. 5). The three terms were hierarchically arranged, meaning that "*techniques* carry out a *method* which is consistent with an *approach*" (ibid.). Anthony perceived an *approach* as "a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning"; "it states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith", and "(…) it is often unarguable except in terms of the effectiveness of the methods which grew out of it" (1972, p. 5). A *method* means for Anthony "an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected *approach*. An *approach* is axiomatic, a *method* is procedural" (1972, p. 6). As it is elaborated later on, a *method* "is the sum and structure of the selection, gradation, and characteristic pedagogy which is carried out on the basis of certain axioms which form the underlying approach" (Anthony and Norris 1972, p. 41). Within an approach there can be many methods; for instance, within the aural-oral approach such methods as *mim-mem* and *pattern practice* are used.[1] As far as the notion of a *technique* is concerned, it is described as "a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective", that is to say that "technique is the level at which classroom procedures are described" (Richards and Rodgers 2001, p. 19). *Techniques* are implementational in that they "actually take place in a classroom". Again, "*techniques* must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well" (2001, p. 19).

As was explained, the reasons for methods constantly coming and going "do not lie in the failure of any particular set of techniques", but "(…) are rather to be found

---

[1] *Mim-mem* and *pattern practice* would be considered techniques by other methodologists.

in the shifts in linguistic, psychological and pedagogical concepts which in turn cause corresponding shifts in notions of what it means to acquire, teach, or learn a language" (Anthony and Norris 1972, p. 40). In other words, "[m]ethods (…) are shaped by many different theories, and the popularity of a method may depend on the popularity of any of these theories" (1972, p. 41). Anthony did not consider his framework as final, leaving some room for 'desirable modifications and refinements'.

Some disagreement over Anthony's definition can be found in the literature and, although it eventually seemed to have withstood the test of time, it came under strong criticism from different sources. Richards and Rodgers, for instance, believe that it "fails to give sufficient attention to the nature of a method itself" (2001, p. 20), as it does not specify the roles of teachers and learners or the role of instructional materials. Additionally, it does not explain how an approach is put into practice in a method or how method and technique are related. Thus, they revised and extended the model, focusing primarily on the notions of method and technique. In their framework "approach and method are treated at the level of *design*, that level in which objectives, syllabus and content are determined, and at which the roles of teachers, learners, and instructional materials are specified"; whereas the level of implementation (i.e. *technique* in Anthony's model) is referred to as *procedure*, the term which they consider "slightly more comprehensive" (2001, p. 20). They comment that "[t]hus, a method is theoretically related to an approach, is organizationally determined by a design, and is practically realized in procedure". *Approach*, following Anthony, "refers to theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching" (2001, p. 20). Approaches, contrary to methods, are more flexible and therefore "they allow for individual interpretations and application. They can be revised and updated over time" (2001, p. 245). Methods, on the other hand, are "relatively fixed in time and there is generally little scope for individual interpretation", "they are learned through training", and "the teacher's role is to follow the method and apply it precisely according to the rules. (…) A method (…) refers to a specific instructional design or system based on a particular theory of language and language learning. It contains detailed specifications of content, roles of teachers and learners, and teaching procedures and techniques. (…) Compared to approaches, methods tend to have a relatively short shelf-life. Because they are often linked to very specific claims and to prescribed practices, they tend to fall out of failure as these practices become unfashionable or discredited" (2001, p. 245). Summing up, Richards and Rodgers define a method as an "umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice" (that is redefined approaches, designs and procedures) (1982, p. 154, quoted after Brown 1994a, p. 48).

In the literature on language teaching some other definitions of the notion of method can be found; however, some of them do not refer to the relationship with other crucial concepts. For obvious reasons, only some of those definitions will be presented here. To start with, Hammerly defines a method as "a set of procedures and techniques that agree with basic assumptions about the nature of language and the purpose and process of second language learning, that deal with such matters as selection and gradation of second language rules and elements, the presentation

of teaching materials and the nature of practice, and that aim at the development of linguistic, communicative, and cultural competence" (1982, p. 218). Later on he adds that "a method is any of the sets of teaching procedures that follow an approach, each method's procedures being based on numerous specific assumptions that are in harmony with the assumption(s) of the approach. (…) A method is practical and specific, whereas an approach is philosophical and general" (1985, p. 12). According to Hammerly, an *approach* is "a general pedagogical orientation based on one or few assumptions related to an explicit or implicit theory" (1985, p. 112), referring to such examples as an oral approach or a linguistic approach. In his understanding, a *method* is "any of the sets of teaching procedures that follow from an approach, each method's procedures being based on numerous specific assumptions that are in harmony with the assumption(s) of the approach" (1985, p. 113). Therefore, an approach can serve as a basis for a number of methods, and the methods can make use of different procedures in the classroom, provided they are not contradictory with the assumptions of the approach. Stern believes that a method, "however ill-defined it may be", is a 'theory' of language teaching "which has resulted from practical and theoretical discussions in a given historical context. It usually implies and sometimes overtly expresses certain objectives, and a particular view of language; it makes assumptions about the language learner; and underlying it are certain beliefs about the nature of the language learning process. It also expresses a view of language teaching by emphasizing certain aspects of teaching as crucial to successful learning" (1983, pp. 452–453). Methods "have constituted theories of language teaching derived partly from practical experience, intuition, and inventiveness, partly from social, political, and educational needs, and partly from theoretical considerations; but they have never been systematically stated as coherent theories of language teaching and learning nor have they been critically verified by empirical experience, except in a few recent cases" (1983, p. 473). It is because of the inadequacy of the concept of a method that "a conviction has gradually spread that language teaching cannot be satisfactorily conceptualized in terms of teaching method alone" (1983, p. 474). In his opinion, it is not always clear what constitutes a particular method, just as the term 'method' is not unequivocal (1983, p. 452). Prabhu (1990, p. 162), in turn, uses the term *method* "inclusively to refer both to a set of activities to be carried out in the classroom and to the theory, belief or plausible concept that informs these activities". Finally, Larsen-Freeman (2000, p. xii), following the *Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (1992), refers to a method as "a way of teaching a language which is based on systematic principles and procedures". All of this shows that the definitions are many and varied, and although they overlap at times, they obviously point to some problems with the understanding of the concept.

According to Brown, Richards and Rodgers made an important contribution to a better understanding of the concept of method by (a) specifying "the necessary elements of language teaching 'designs' that had been neglected" (i.e. objectives, syllabus, activities, learner and teacher roles, and the role of instructional materials), and (b) by drawing attention to some previously overlooked weaknesses of methods (e.g. methods being too restrictive, too pre-programmed, and too 'pre-packaged', by

assuming that the teachers' actions in the classroom can be translated into a set of procedures that would be suitable with different learners in a variety of contexts) (1994a, p. 49). Thus, even though Richards and Rodgers' reformulation of the concept of method was 'soundly conceived', it was not accepted by the professional community. As Brown (1994a, p. 49) explains, "what they would like us to call 'method' is more comfortably referred to (…) as methodology". What is more, the terminology that is used in the literature on the subject seems more reflective of Anthony's terms, although some changes have been introduced.

Other researchers introduce similar distinctions, contributing to further problems with the concept of method. For instance, Richards (1990, p. 11) distinguishes between *methods* and *methodology*, where the former notion refers to "activities, tasks, and learning experiences selected by the teacher to achieve learning, and how these are used within the teaching/learning process". *Methodology* has a theoretical basis in the teacher's assumptions about language and second/ foreign language learning, teacher and learner roles, and learning activities and instructional materials. As such, it is not "something fixed, a set of rigid principles and procedures that the teacher must conform to" (1990, p. 35); it is an exploratory process that the teacher engages in every time s/he enters the language classroom. Such a process, by nature, must be dynamic and creative, which makes it different from situations in which teachers have to follow certain models, i.e. methods, which they have been with during teacher training programmes.

Kumaravadivelu (2006, pp. 83–84) draws attention to some problems with the term *method*, as we use it to refer to two different elements of language teaching: *methods as proposed by theorists*, and *methods as practiced by teachers*. Classroom research clearly shows that even teachers who claim to follow a particular method do not actually adhere to the basic principles associated with it. He uses the label *method* to refer to "the established methods conceptualized and constructed by experts in the field", and *methodology* "to refer to what practicing teachers actually do in the classroom to achieve their stated or unstated teaching objectives" (2006, p. 84). With reference to teachers, Kumaravadivelu reports some facts from research which illustrate some problems that teachers have with understanding the concept and implementing it in practice. These are as follows (2006, p. 166):

- teachers who claim to follow a particular method do not conform to its theoretical principles and classroom procedures at all;
- teachers who claim to follow different methods often use the same classroom procedures;
- teachers who claim to follow the same method often use different procedures; and
- teachers develop and follow in their classroom a carefully crafted sequence of activities not necessarily associated with any particular method.

At this point, it is necessary to point out that nowadays teachers seem to no longer believe that a single theory or a single method will be of help in confronting the challenges of everyday teaching. Thus, they rely on their own intuition and practical knowledge in trying to decide what will or will not work in their teaching

context. In fact, there seems to be quite a big difference between what the theorists say and what teachers practice in their classrooms.

Unfortunately, problems with language teaching methods are not limited to teachers only; they are more numerous and include the following:

1. It is not always clear what constitutes a particular method (Stern 1983).
2. Methods represent a relatively fixed combination of language teaching beliefs (Stern 1983; Richards and Rodgers 2001).
3. Methods present "a pre-determined, packaged deal for teachers that incorporates a static view of teaching" (Richards 1990, p. 37).
4. They are prescriptive – teachers have to accept the claims or underlying theories and apply them to their practice; thus, good teaching is regarded as a correct use of the method and its principles and techniques; learners are treated as passive recipients of the method (Brown 2002).
5. They are characterized by overemphasis on single aspects as the central issue of language teaching and learning (Stern 1983).
6. All methods make assumptions about the learner and ways of learning which have not been tested against the realities of actual teaching.
7. Generally, methods are quite distinctive at the early, beginning stages of a language course and rather indistinguishable from each other at later stages (Brown 2002).
8. It was once thought that methods can be empirically tested by scientific quantification to determine which one is 'best'; however it is difficult to implement (Prabhu 1990).
9. Methods may be culturally inappropriate; a method that is suitable in one part of the world may not be culturally acceptable/appropriate in another (e.g. problems with learner-centred methods in some countries/educational systems) (Larsen-Freeman 1999).
10. They reflect a negative view of teachers as the ones "who cannot be trusted to teach well" when left on their own (Richards 1990, p. 37).
11. The method concept is prescriptive, as it gives prescription to classroom behaviors rather than analyzing what is happening in language classrooms; deskilling of the teacher's role (Pennycook 1989, p. 610).

The discussion of methods and method-related problems undertaken above provides a number of arguments against viewing methods as a central concept in language teaching. It also provides an explanation why attempts have been made in language teaching to move away from the concept of a method.

4 Alternative Methods or Alternatives to Methods?

Together with the realization that there has never been and there will never be a perfect method, various researchers offered solutions trying to break away with the concept. While it is undeniable that the greatest number of alternatives to methods

appeared at the end of the twentieth century, it has to be acknowledged at the same time that such attempts had been made much earlier. One of the most obvious options almost readily available was *eclecticism,* which was advocated by a number of specialists in the field. To start with, one of the proponents of eclectic language teaching was Palmer (1964, quoted by Titone 1968, p. 110), who, referring to language teaching methods said: "(…) the eclectic approach will say 'find the right stone to kill the right bird' and it is advisable to kill one bird with more than one stone".

In a similar vein, Rivers (1981, quoted in Stern 1983, p. 478) recommended an eclectic approach for practical reasons. As she explained, language teachers "faced with the daily task of helping students to learn a new language cannot afford the luxury of complete dedication to each new method or approach that comes into vogue". Furthermore, she believed that eclectics try "to absorb the best techniques of all the well-known language-teaching methods into their classroom procedures, using them for the purposes for which they are most appropriate". In other words, she perceived such an approach as keeping in line with the intuitions of many practicing teachers.

Another well-known methodologist, Hammerly (1982), was convinced that in spite of the growing dissatisfaction with language teaching methods, improvement in language teaching could still come from modification of successful *eclectic* methods. As mentioned elsewhere, he viewed methods as an important variable in language teaching, since, contrary to other factors which are beyond control of teachers, classroom methodology is actually amenable to change in a way that can effect success in language learning. He voiced an opinion that "the 'ideal' method of language teaching would be one that would take all facts into account, borrow the best that existing and former methods have to offer, add innovations as needed, and combine all of this into a harmonious new whole in agreement with a sound comprehensive theory and adapted to the characteristics of the learners, to program goals, and to learning conditions" (1985, p. 165, cf. p. 4). He specifies the characteristics that such a method should have (1982, pp. 270–271, 641–644) and elaborates upon them in a subsequent publication (Hammerly 1985). One of them states that such a method "would be *eclectic*, incorporating the best from various methods and approaches and combining thee elements into a harmonious and effective whole". It is his contention that "enlightened eclecticism is the only reasonable way out of the present profusion of conflicting methodologies" (1982, p. 271). The method proposed by Hammerly is called the *C.A.B. Method* (but also CA-OB, see Hammerly 1985)—where C stands for *Cognitive* (or actually *Cognitive habit formation*), A—for *Audiolingual* (but also *Audiolingual-visual/Audio-Oral*), and B for *Bilingual*, referring to the main characteristic features of the method (cf. Hammerly 1982, pp. 640–641, 1985, p. 166). As Hammerly explains, his method, being an eclectic method, "includes every type of good teaching that is not in conflict with its basic principles. It is thus the opposite of special or exclusive methods that attempt to teach second languages by relying primarily on a single procedure". On the contrary, it is a "developing system, with room for new procedures and improvements as they prove themselves effective". However, there also comes a warning that "the concept of enlightened eclecticism excludes

the haphazard putting together of any group of procedures that do not harmonize" (1982, p. 641; see also Hammerly 1985, pp. 171–187). The method is not "proposed as something ready-made and available, but rather in the hope that at least some members of our profession will want to fully develop it and try it" (1982, p. 644).

Other methodologists advocate a similar approach to methods, which is referred to as *pluralism*. For instance, Larsen-Freeman (2000), contrary to the popular view that individual methods can be either suitable or unsuitable for a particular context, and that different methods belong to different contexts, believes that there is some value to each method and that different methods, or parts of methods should be made use of in the same context. In her opinion (2000, p. 187):

> (…) teachers need to inquire into their practice. They need to reflect on what they do and why they do it, and need to be open to learning about the practices and research of others. They need to interact with others, and need to try new practices in order to continually search for or devise the best method they can for who they are, who their students are, and the conditions and context of their teaching.

In consequence, teachers subscribing to the pluralistic view of methods are encouraged to pick and choose from among the existing methods to create "their own blend" for a particular context. Such a practice is also known as *eclecticism.* It is crucial for teachers to remember, however, that techniques which combine into a coherent method have to be chosen in "a principled manner", which means that the process of picking and choosing is not random, but takes place in accordance with a certain consistent philosophy of teaching and learning that teachers follow. Hence, we talk about *principled eclecticism,* involving conscious reasoning on the part of the teacher (Larsen-Freeman 2000, p. 183). As Larsen-Freeman (1987, p. 7) comments, "(…) it is not uncommon for teachers today to practice a principled *eclecticism,* combining techniques and principles from various methods in a carefully reasoned manner". She goes on to say that it is not possible "to consistently demonstrate the superiority of one method over another, for all teachers and all students, under all possible circumstances" and that "teaching is a matter of making informed choices. (…) Whereas once teachers could be trained in one way of teaching, now they must be educated to choose among the options that exist" (1987, p. 9).

Eclectic teaching is not the only manifestation of a shift in language pedagogy away from the single method concept as the main approach to language teaching. Stern is convinced that abandoning this concept is a step in the right direction "to overcome the narrowness, rigidities, and imbalances which have resulted from conceptualizing language teaching purely or mainly through the concept of method" (1983, p. 477). His contribution is an attempt to develop a broad conceptual framework for language teaching by putting forward a concept of *teaching strategy*. His claim is that "it is analytically more effective, and pedagogically more flexible to operate with the broader concept of *teaching strategy* under which can be subsumed a large number of specified *teaching techniques* (1983, p. 505).[2]

---

[2] Stern (1992, p. 277) reserves the term *strategy* for "broad intentional action", viewing teaching strategies "as part of the policy level" in his framework (cf. Figure I.2). *Techniques* refer to "more specific behaviors, operations, procedures, and activities", relating to the practical action level.

He perceives strategies as "deriving from the three crucial issues in language learning, (…) "labeled L1-L2 connection, the code-communication dilemma, and the explicit-implicit option" (1983, p. 505). As a result, we end up with six major strategies, representing three dimensions:

(a) the *intralingual-crosslingual* (*intracultural-crosscultural) dimensions*, concerning the use or non-use of L1 in L2 learning;
(b) the *objective-subjective* (*analytical-experiential*) *dimension*, resulting from the code-communication dilemma; it concerns the possibility of treating the target language and culture as either codes that can be studied and mastered or as something to experience subjectively through communication;
(c) the *explicit-implicit dimension*, relating to techniques which encourage the learner either to adopt a cognitive approach to the new language (learning) or to employ techniques which encourage more intuitive absorption of language, i.e. acquisition (Stern 1983, pp. 505–507).

The three strategies constitute an attempt to conceptualize language teaching in more general educational terms, and, according to Stern, make it possible to analyze language teaching in a more comprehensive way and relate it to other basic concepts, as well as to other areas of educational activity (see also Stern 1992).

Strategies also constitute the basis of yet another framework. Commenting on teacher training programmes, Marton (1988, p. xiv) argues that such programmes should provide trainees with some form of firm theoretical scaffolding or general schema, which will help them to plan their teaching at the beginning of their careers and to interpret their experiences in a principled and coherent way". On the basis of many years of experience with teacher training and observation he suggests that such a schema "should be directly related to the central issue in language pedagogy, that is to the question how to make teaching so efficient that it would promote only genuine and successful learning experiences" (1988, p. xiv). In other words, it is necessary to identify the possible options, i.e. learning procedures,[3] leading to a successful development of L2 competence. According to the researcher, three such basic options are possible, that is "listening to or reading texts in the target language with comprehension; attempting to communicate via this language; or reproducing, reconstructing, and transforming model texts in the L2" (1988, p. xiv). The three options can be promoted by three basic teaching strategies[4]: *receptive, communicative,* and *reconstructive*; additionally, it is possible to combine the three strategies, with the various combinations resulting in a

[3] The procedures, according to Marton, "are derived from a set of correlative assumptions concerning the nature of language, the nature of second language development, and the functions of language teaching" (1988, p. 2).

[4] Marton defines a language teaching strategy "as a globally conceived set of pedagogical procedures imposing a definite learning strategy on the learner directly leading to the development of competence in the target language" (1988, p. 2). Language teaching strategies are directly linked with the idea of success in gaining a practical command of the target language.

fourth strategy, namely the *eclectic*[5] one. As far as the effectiveness of the strategies is concerned, Marton explains that none of the strategies is superior to or more effective than the others. Furthermore, such effectiveness should be considered in relation to two sets of variables, namely *learner* and *contextual factors*, which means that under given circumstances only one of those strategies may be considered as the most effective. It is Marton's belief that these four strategies represent the basic options in language pedagogy and form the kind of theoretical framework which can help the language teacher to find his or her own direction.

Yet another solution, although not so different from the ones above, was the idea to conceptualize language teaching in terms of some general principles of learning. One of the supporters of such an approach has been Brown (1994a), known at the same time as one of the staunchest critics of methods. Brown has long claimed that teachers should operate at the level of some "general principles of good language teaching and learning". Such an approach is the only feasible one in situations where the teacher is faced with a multiplicity of language teaching contexts and purposes, as well as a diversity of student needs, learning variables and the like. Hence, general principles, derived from research and observation, should be at the base of the teaching practice of every teacher, the practice which will cater for the goals and purposes of learning of his or her students (cf. Brown 1994b; 2002, pp. 12–13). According to Brown, the ten "principled maxims or "rules" for good language learning can focus teachers on sound classroom practices" (2002, p. 17). As he comments, "[a]s teachers and teacher trainees develop and carry out classroom techniques, they can benefit by grounding everything they do in well-established principles of language learning and teaching. In doing so they will be less likely to bring a pre-packaged – and possibly ineffective – method to bear, and more likely to be directly responsive to their students' purposes and goals" (2002, p. 17). The principles can be summed up under the following headings: *automaticity, meaningful learning, the anticipation of reward, intrinsic motivation, strategic investment, language ego, self-confidence, risk-taking, the language culture connection, the native language effect, interlanguage, and communicative competence.*[6] As can be seen, the principles reflect "widely accepted theoretical assumptions about second language acquisition" which are central to "most language acquisition contexts" (2002, p. 12).

Principles are also at the heart of teaching practice advocated by Bailey (1996, cited in Richards and Rodgers 2001, p. 251), who offers the following guidelines for language teachers:

- Engage all learners in the lesson.
- Make learners, and not the teacher, the focus of the lesson.
- Provide maximum opportunities for student participation.
- Develop learner responsibility.

---

[5] In this instance by eclectic use of the strategies is meant not their simultaneous application, but the possibility of combining them in a consecutive manner.

[6] For a discussion and a complete list of principles see Brown (1994a, 2000).

- Be tolerant of learners' mistakes.
- Develop learners' confidence.
- Teach learning strategies.
- Respond to learners' difficulties and build on them.
- Use a maximum amount of student-to-student activities.
- Promote cooperation among learners.
- Practice both accuracy and fluency.
- Address learners' needs and interests

Yet another proposal comes from Rodgers (2000, pp. 2–3), who put forth ten scenarios, which, in his view, may "individually and collectively, shape the teaching of second languages in the next decades of this new millennium". These include, among others, *teacher/learner collaboration in the language classroom*, *method synergistics* (Rodgers' idea of dealing with the limitations posed by different language teaching methods), *curriculum developmentalism, content basics,* or *multiintelligensia, strategopedia*. In his opinion, the profession will simply witness "the carrying on and refinement of current trends", rather than a dramatic pendulum swing (2000, p. 3).

Kumaravadivelu offers still another proposal, yet not so much different from the one put forward by Rodgers (2000). He sees *post-method pedagogy* as characterised by "a search for an alternative to method, rather than an alternative method" (2003, p. 33). He proposes a *macrostrategic framework* which is supposed to guide teachers in their classroom practice. The framework includes the following macrostrategies (Kumaravadivelu 2003, pp. 39–40):

– Maximize learning opportunities.
– Minimize perceptual mismatches.
– Facilitate negotiated interaction.
– Promote learner autonomy.
– Foster language awareness.
– Activate intuitive heuristics.
– Contextualize linguistic input.
– Integrate language skills.
– Ensure social relevance.
– Raise cultural consciousness.

Kumaravadivelu elucidates that the insights for the above framework are drawn from current theoretical, empirical, and experiential knowledge which have their sources in classroom-oriented research. He believes that a pedagogic framework must emerge from classroom experience and experimentation, although it should not be confined to such a source. It is important to remember, however, that the available classroom research findings provide a substantial body of data which cannot be neglected when establishing a frame of reference. The framework is by no means obligatory; however, it can be used by teachers as a basis for designing their own strategies, matching the requirements of their own teaching context.

The alternatives to methods discussed in this section are a testimony to some important changes taking place in foreign language education, as they offer a number of new options to language teachers. The question remains, however, whether teachers are prepared to deal with them in their teaching practice.

5 Language Teaching Methods in Language Teacher Education

As it transpires from the discussion above, over the last few decades the ELT profession, at least at the theoretical level, has undergone quite a number of changes as far as the concept of a method is concerned. Not only has the search for the best method been given up, but also, as a result of disappointing research results, the value of methods has been undermined. Various researchers have pointed to numerous problems and limitations related to the concept itself, postulating moving away from the methods era to the postmethod condition. Yet, the question remains whether abandoning methods altogether is a justified decision, and whether, perhaps there can be still the place for them in broadly conceived language education.

It seems that in spite of all the criticism directed at them at the theoretical level, methods are still considered valid not only by practitioners, but also by a number of theorists. Hammerly, for instance, has always perceived methods as an important variable in language teaching, as, in his opinion, contrary to most other factors decisive about success or failure which are beyond the control of the teacher (e.g. intelligence, aptitude), "classroom methodology is what actually can be changed to effect success in language learning" (1982, p. 218). In spite of his harsh criticism of methods, Nunan (1991, p. 248) also believes that there are aspects of methods which "might be usefully incorporated into one's classroom practice". He points out, however, that teachers need to take into consideration the purposes for which the target language will be used and the functions it will fulfil, as they decide about which classroom techniques and procedures should be used. Thus, he emphasizes the importance of knowing about and understanding of methods and their goals in order to be able to use them expertly in the classroom.

On the basis of what has been said so far, a claim can be made that methods are still valid as far as the preparation of language teachers is concerned. Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.16), for instance, believe that the study of methods should constitute an important part of teacher preparation programmes, giving the following reasons:

- The study of approaches and methods provides teachers with a view of how the field of language teaching has evolved.
- Approaches and methods can be studied not as prescriptions for how to teach but as a source of well used practices, which teachers can adapt or implement based on their own needs;

- Experience in using different approaches and methods can provide teach-ers with basic teaching skills that they can later add to or supplement as they develop teaching experience.

Among the undisputable advantages of studying methods, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 246) list the following:

- they solve beginning teachers' problems in that they offer them ready-made decisions as to what to teach and how to do that;
- "method enthusiasts create together a professional community with a common purpose, ideology, and vernacular" where they can share ideas and experiences;
- methods can serve as "a rich source of activities, some of which can be adapted or adopted regardless of one's own ideology:
- they offer to the novice teachers "the reassurance of a detailed set of steps to follow in the classroom".

As Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 250) emphasize, approaches and meth-ods have always been crucial in language education and for that very reason they believe that both teachers and students should become familiar with them as major tools of the trade. Approaches as well as methods are based on knowledge and experience of generations of teachers and other participants of the language learn-ing/language teaching process, and, as such, they should constitute the foundations on which language teaching should be based. It is believed that the knowledge of/ about methods and approaches would help future teachers:

- to learn how to use different approaches and methods and understand when they might be useful;
- to understand some of the issues and controversies that characterize the history of language teaching;
- to participate in language learning experiences based on different approaches and methods as a basis for reflection and comparison;
- to be aware of the rich set of activity resources available to the imaginative teacher;
- to appreciate how theory and practice can be linked from a variety of different perspectives.

Additionally, training in particular methods, with their sets of fixed techniques and procedures may be essential for novice teachers to aid them in conducting les-sons with confidence because at the beginning teaching seems to consist mostly of using techniques and procedures suggested by specialists. They are more tan-gible than strategies, principles, scenarios or macrostrategies in that they offer a concrete range of activities ready to be used in the classroom. This view is con-firmed by Bell (2003, 2007) who claims that although the notion of method no longer has a place in the thinking of applied linguists, it does play an important role in the way teachers think and it still remains an apt description of what teach-ers do in their classrooms. On the basis of the results of research conducted among language teachers, Bell (2007) concludes that that most of them think of meth-ods in terms of techniques which realize a set of principles or goals and they are

open to any method that would provide them with practical solutions to problems they encounter in their particular teaching context. The knowledge of methods is equated with a set of options which make it possible to respond in an adequate way to the requirements of specific classroom contexts; it is crucial to teacher growth and development as it constitutes a source of options and a basis for *eclecticism* in the classroom.

The postmethod era, therefore, need not imply the end of methods but rather an understanding of the limitations of the notion of method as it is narrowly defined and a desire to go beyond those limitations. Methods are far from being dead; they provide a basis for building one's own teaching. Larsen-Freeman (1999) warns the language teaching profession against being blinded by the criticism of methods which may result in the failure to see "their invaluable contribution to teacher education and continuing development". For her a method "is a constellation of thought-in-action links", and, as such, it serves the purpose of getting people to think about why they do what they do. In language teaching we need to understand reasons for doing something in the classroom, so that we can choose and match the techniques at our disposal according to the needs and goals of our students.

Likewise, Richards and Rodgers believe that generally, "(…) teachers and trainers need to be able to use approaches and methods flexibly and creatively, based on their own judgement and experience. In the process they should be encouraged to transform and adapt the methods they use to make them their own" (2001, p. 250). In their view, "an approach or a predetermined method, with its associated activities, principles and techniques, may be an essential starting point for an inexperienced teacher" (2001, p. 250). Richards and Rodgers further emphasize the need on the part of teachers to develop their own personal approach to teaching and the crucial role of personal beliefs and principles in developing such an approach. In the process, it is necessary for teachers to understand their own position with reference to the following (2001, p. 251):

- their role in the classroom;
- the nature of effective teaching and learning;
- the difficulties learners face and how these can be addressed;
- successful learning activities;
- the structure of an effective lesson.

Summing up the discussion on the usefulness and value of language teaching methods, it is useful at this point to refer to Prabhu in whose opinion there may be a factor more basic than the choice between methods, namely "teachers subjective understanding of the teaching they do". Prabhu believes that "teachers need to operate with some personal conceptualization of how their teaching leads to desired learning", i.e. they need to develop "a personal sense of plausibility" (1990, p. 172) which may vary from one teacher to another, may be more or less fully formed, more or less consciously considered or articulated. When it is engaged, it means that the teacher is involved and the teaching is not mechanical; what is more, it is productive. What seems important it to look at teaching as an

"activity whose value depends centrally on whether it is informed or uninformed by the teacher's sense of plausibility" (to what degree it is 'real' or mechanical). In this sense, "a method is seen simply as a highly developed and highly articulated sense of plausibility, with a certain power to influence other specialists' or teachers' perceptions. Perhaps the best method varies from one teacher to another, but only in the sense that it is best for each teacher to operate with his or her own sense of plausibility at any given time" (1990, p. 172).

6 Conclusions

Clearly, effective language teaching depends on teachers who have a high degree of professional expertise and knowledge. In their teaching practice, they are expected to draw on their knowledge of the subject matter, their knowledge of and about the learners, and their knowledge of and about teaching. They need to be able to explain their choices, judgements and actions in their classrooms with reasoned arguments. They need to understand that they are not just consumers of other people's theories, materials, and the like, but that they are actually capable of making valuable contributions. As follows from the discussion above, the knowledge about language teaching methods and being able to implement them in the classroom is vital in developing one's personal approach to teaching, an approach in which teachers do not just follow recipes, but use their own methods shaped by their understanding of what happens in the classroom.

References

Allwright, D. and K. M. Bailey. 1991. *Focus on the language classroom: An introduction to classroom research for language teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Anthony, E. M. 1963. Approach, method and technique. *English Language Teaching* 17: 63-67. (Reprinted in *Teaching English as a second language*, eds. H. B. Allen and R. N. Campbell, 1972, 4-8. New York: McGraw-Hill).

Anthony, E. M. and W. E. Norris. 1972. Method in language teaching, In *Readings on English as a second language*, ed. K. Croft, 39-48. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers.

Bailey, K. M. 1996. The best laid plans: Teachers' in-class decisions to depart from their lesson plans. In *Voices from the language classroom*, eds. K. M. Bailey and D. Nunan, 15-40. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bell, D. M. 2003. Method and postmethod: Are they really so incompatible? *TESOL Quarterly* 37: 325-336.

Bell, D. M. 2007. Do teachers think that methods are dead? *ELT Journal* 61: 135-143.

Brown, H. D. 1994a. *Teaching by principles: Interactive language teaching methodology*. New York: Prentice Hall Regents.

Brown, H. D. 1994b. *Principles of language learning and teaching.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Brown, H. D. 2000. *Principles of language learning and teaching.* (fourth edition). Harlow: Pearson Education.

Brown, H. D. 2002. English language teaching in the 'post-method' era: Toward better diagnosis, treatment and assessment. In *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*, eds. J. C. Richards and W. A. Renandya, 9-18. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, R. 1992. *Second language acquisition and language pedagogy*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Hammerly, H. 1982. *Synthesis in second language teaching.* Blaine, WA: Second Language Publications.

Hammerly, H. 1985. *An integrated theory of language teaching and its practical consequences*. Blaine, WA: Second Language Publications.

Howatt, A. P. R. and H. G. Widdowson. 2004. *A history of English language teaching*. (second edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kelly, L.G. 1969. *25 centuries of language teaching*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

Kumaradivelu, B. 2003. *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching.* New Haven/London: Yale University Press.

Kumaravadivelu, B. 2006. *Understanding language teaching.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Larsen-Freeman, D. 1987. From unity to diversity: Twenty-five years of language-teaching methodology. *English Teaching Forum* 24: 2-10.

Larsen-Freeman, D. 1999. On the appropriateness of language teaching methods in language and development. (http://www.languages.ait.th/hanoi_proceedings/larsen-freeman.htm).

Larsen-Freeman, D. 2000. *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. (second edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marton, W. 1988. *Methods in English language teaching. Frameworks and options.* Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.

Nunan, D. 1991. *Language teaching methodology.* New York: Prentice Hall.

Palmer, H. E. 1964. *The principles of language-study.* London: Oxford University Press.

Pennycook, A. 1989. The concept of method, interested knowledge, and politics of language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly* 23: 589-618.

Prabhu, N.S. 1990. There is no best method – why? *TESOL Quarterly* 24: 161-176.

Richards, J. C. 1990. *The language teaching matrix.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. and T. S. Rodgers. 2001. *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. (second edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rodgers, T. 2000. Methodology in the new millennium. *English Teaching Forum* 38: 2-13.

Stern, H. H. 1983. *Fundamental concepts of language teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stern, H. H. 1992. *Issues and options in language teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stevick, E.W. 1976. *Memory, meaning and method.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

Titone, R. 1968. *Teaching foreign languages. An historical sketch.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Toney, T. 1983.Guides for language learners. *English Language Teaching Journal* 37: 352-358.

Widdowson, H.G. 2004. A perspective on recent trends. In *A history of English language teaching*. (second edition), eds. A. P. R. Howatt and H. G. Widdowson, 353-372. Oxford: Oxford University Press.