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Teaching English in Primary School: A Comparison of Different Approaches

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1 Introduction

There are uncountable methods of English teaching spread around the world. The question of which English as a second language (ESL) teaching method to choose remains a constant struggle that teachers and pedagogical coordinators have to go through every year. In order to comprehend this struggle, it is necessary to take a step back and understand how different methods developed over the centuries. From its shy beginnings in merchant communities along the English Channel to almost every classroom around the globe, ESL teaching has been influenced throughout time by many linguists, psychologists, and most importantly teachers. External factors such as socio-historical changes, technological advancements, and the school environment, have also greatly influenced the way ESL teaching has progressed (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

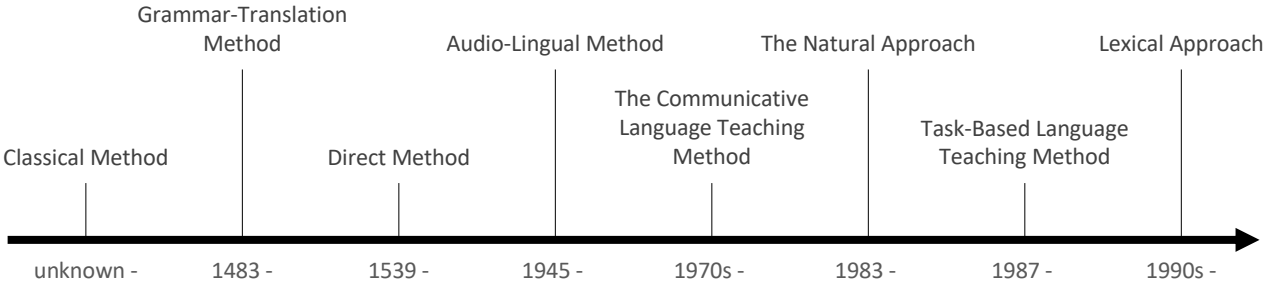
This thesis investigates ways to reform established ESL teaching methods for children in primary school. In order to achieve that, it is necessary to analyze the developments in ESL done by researchers, accounting for both pitfalls and successes. Therefore, a thorough study in this case should combine successful strategies and lessons learned from research, culminating in the proposed approach described in this thesis. Efficiency in ESL teaching should be contingent on verbalization, frequency within context, and stimuli activation. In other words, students from a young age should build and strengthen the habit of reading books, reinforced by constructions previously learned without context. Success herein should help students develop a more independent disposition toward their own vocabulary building. This is the basis for my research, from now on referred to as *my preferred teaching approach*.

The first part of this thesis is dedicated to the definition of *method*, breaking it down to three levels: *approach*, *design*, and *procedure*. This is indispensable for the understanding of this thesis and the development of *my preferred teaching approach*.

The second part takes a closer look at the historical background of the development of ESL teaching methods. It presents how some ESL methods have risen and how they have influenced *my preferred teaching approach*. From the early stages of development, ESL teaching methods copied the teaching techniques used in classical Latin and ancient Greek. The fundamental changes in ESL from reading and writing to speaking and listening, continued with the evolution of grammar teaching, and the focus on phonetics and pronunciation. Additionally, application of real-life situations in the classroom culminated with today's usage of Corpus Linguistics in texts. Furthermore, the concepts of well-known methods which influenced *my preferred teaching approach* are introduced. The methods and approaches that will be analyzed are the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, the Natural Approach,

the Communicative Language Teaching, the Task-Based Language Teaching, and the Lexical Approach (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Methods and Approaches



The third part of the thesis accounts for the research of *my preferred teaching approach*, with the test and theoretical background which led to it. The method is based on information gathered by previously analyzed methods and the results obtained from them over the centuries. In order to validate this new approach a test was performed with first grade students in a Brazilian school in 2018.

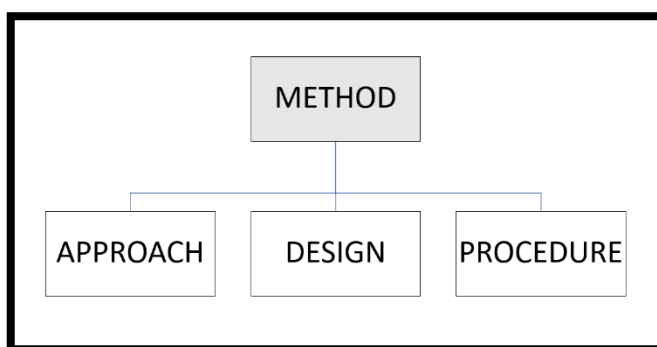
The fourth part of the thesis summarizes, investigates, compares, and discusses all the ideas and methods portrayed in the former chapters. It compares the methods and approaches while having a critical view of their influence on *my preferred teaching approach*, especially in comparison with the aforementioned characteristics of *approach*, *design*, and *procedure*. A table of comparison sums up and complements all the findings with the most important characteristics, in order to emphasize the similarities and differences between the methods and approaches. The discussion also clarifies the results of the research and suggests future improvements.

Finding a new approach to teach ESL to primary school students requires extensive research. The intention of this thesis is to highlight the important aspects of ESL teaching, while providing a new option to the field.

2 What is Method, Approach, Design, and Procedure?

According to Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers (1986), assessing the history of language teaching methods lays out a context for the analysis of present-day methods. Given the historical point of view, arguments on how to teach foreign languages have led to the reflection of what modern methods are based on. The shift towards oral proficiency, rather than reading and writing, is a good example of one of the changes that occurred throughout the history of language teaching. Occasionally, some linguistic or psychological theories have been used to advance a practical or more philosophical level of a second language (throughout this thesis the term 'second language' will be addressed as L2 and 'first' or 'native language' as L1) teaching method; in some others, the practices in the classroom have led to these advancements. Many efforts have been made to abstract the nature of a *method*. Some investigated the association between theory and practice, while others looked upon applying procedures; these forged the branch of Second Language Acquisition: one of the main fields of applied linguistics. (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 1-14).

Richards and Rodgers (1986) review that almost all language teaching methods follow the same logic, therefore a thorough investigation into their essence is necessary. The whole is called the **Method** and is divided into three categories, *approach*, *design*, and *procedure*. **Approach** is the philosophical branch of the method that accounts for cognition, allowing one to consider the conditions of language learning and the nature of language. **Design** represents the general aims of a *method*: the syllabus, exercises, ways of teaching, educational material, as well as the roles of teachers and students. The third and final category is **Procedure**. This pertains to practices, behaviors, and techniques administered and observed in the classroom. Consequently, a *method*, containing these aspects, generalizes a strategy for teaching L2 in the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 14-29).



Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers (1986) emphasize that in **learning theory**, the preoccupation is with the central learning processes and the circumstances that are

believed to promote language learning. In language theory, there is great interest in a model of linguistic competence, a concern with the basic aspects of linguistic structure, and an application of language. Teachers can develop their own teaching techniques, with a knowledge of language and a theory of learning. They can continually change, vary, and modify the forms of teaching given the students' reports, their reactions to the educational practices, the teacher's perception of learning, the lack of time for lessons, the students' absorptions of the tasks, etc. Teachers who hold a similar understanding of *approach* can apply different concepts within the *procedure*. Therefore, *approach* does not define *procedure*; theories do not command *procedures*. *Design* links *approach* with *procedure* (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 18-19).

Richards and Rodgers highlighted that there is a minimum of three contrasting theoretical views about the **nature of language and the nature of language learning**. The first is the *structural view*, a view in which language is treated as a system of elements that intrinsically encode meaning. The second is the *functional view*, in which the emphasis is on verbalization instead of grammar. The third, the *interactional view*, focuses its efforts on the communication between people (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 16-17). According to Richards and Rodgers, granting the fact that certain theories of the nature of language may support the rationale for a teaching method, distinct methods can descend originally from a theory of language learning. A theory of learning that supports an *approach* recognizes the psycholinguistic processes connected to language learning and the circumstances that instigate learning. For example, *process-oriented theories* are created by "habit formation, induction, inferencing, hypothesis, testing and generalization" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 18). The theories that focused on the environment in which language learning occurs and the nature of human beings are called *condition-oriented theories* (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 18).

Many views have come across L2 teaching methods. In 2009 Patsy Martin Lightbown and Nina Spada describe the importance of the innate knowledge of the students. Other authors treat the role of the environment as crucial, while some others seek to combine the native input of the students and the environmental aspects in a description of how the acquisition of the L2 develops. Combining these two aspects, many theories of the nature of language learning consider that the acquisition of L2 is similar to the acquisition of the L1 (Lightbown & Spada, 2009).

According to Richards and Rodgers, forming a *method* requires an *approach* to organize a *design*. *Design* is where language content is chosen and organized in a syllabus. According to the draft of Sinclair and Renouf for "a syllabus to have an important role in education, it should [...] be as independent of linguistic or pedagogical

theory as possible, and the theoretical background should be seen primarily as a vehicle for the clear expression of the syllabus” (Sinclair & Renouf, 1988). The syllabus is where the tasks and teaching activities are created; it is also where the roles of students, teachers, and educational material take place (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 20).

The **syllabus** can, according to J. D. Brown (2006), be formed in many different ways. The *Structural syllabus* concentrates on grammatical forms (the Classical and the Grammar-Translation Methods are perfect examples) maintaining its base on the idea that grammatical structures are essential for the learning of an L2. It selects exercises and suitable texts, starting with those structures considered easier to the most difficult. The *Situational syllabus* focuses on the issue that language is always found in context or in a special situation (the Direct and Audio-Lingual Methods fall into this category). Consequently, their texts and books are structured around situations, something quite different from the *Topical syllabus*, which seeks to structure its texts and books around topics. The *Functional syllabus*, as the name suggests, focuses on functions, which are the things we usually do with language, such as ordering something or describing the things around us (the Communicative Language Teaching Method is a good example). There is also the *Notional syllabus*, the *Skill-based syllabus*, and the *Task-based syllabus*, which are based on distinct day-to-day activities that students need to perform. These activities can include anything from taking the bus to go to the bank (a perfect example for this syllabus is the Task-Based Language Teaching Method). Syllabuses are sometimes combined, and this occurs for example between the *Situational* and the *Topical syllabuses* (Brown, 2006). Finally, the *Lexical syllabus*, which represents a drastic shift towards vocabulary, is used in the classroom environment. According to Sinclair and Renouf in their draft paper *A lexical syllabus for language learning*, there is great importance in the number of words a student of an L2 knows. It is sometimes used as a great measurement value of progress in the L2. They stated that the approaches taken to vocabulary building have not been methodical in their efforts to establish goals. Correspondingly, a lesson, that does not use lists for memorization, focused on L2 vocabulary building, would not be able to avoid syntax. It is particularly hard to teach, simultaneously, a syllabus organized for both grammar and lexis. A lexical syllabus, in the beginning, does not inspire vocabulary building, but rather only motivates students to practice the words they already know by bringing them together with other words. The importance of frequency is crucial to L2 teaching, but it cannot only focus on the most common words (Sinclair & Renouf, 1988).

Richards and Rodgers also review that the **exercises** supported by a method serve to differentiate it from other methods. Exercises planned to center on the

advancement of certain psycholinguistic processes in language acquisition will vary from those aimed for grammar mastery. This observation shows how *procedures* are important to define an entire method. The classroom exercises that had grammar as its center are distinct from those that have communication as its center. The blueprint of an educational system is remarkably connected to how students are seen. A method is regarded by what it asks from the students during the learning process. This is perceived in the level of influence that students may have on others through the conception over grouping, the exercises that are performed, the level of authority over the content, and naturally how the students view the course. Types of exercises in methods include the central categories of learning and teaching that the method supports. Some methods suggest different dispositions in the classroom, an oral drilling method requires a contrasting arrangement of students rather than a method with “problem-solving/information-exchange activities involving pair work” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 22). The performance of the teacher will fundamentally consider both the objectives of the method and the learning theory that asserts the method. The types of functions that teachers are assumed to perform are what links them to which method they are using. Teachers’ roles in methods can be analyzed on many different levels and these levels vary. They can be examined by the level of control the teacher has over the development of the learning process. From the teacher’s accountability, to the social structure that involves learners and teachers, methods fluctuate with regards to the role of the teacher. Some methods posit that the teacher is the root of all knowledge and guidance, while other methods illustrate the teacher’s role as a facilitator, consultant, and force. Some even try to make it impossible for a teacher to commit a mistake, binding the teacher to an educational material which follows lesson plans that can only be performed in a specific way (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 22-24).

The final issue in the level of *design* addresses **educational materials**. These define content, state or suggest the amount of time and attention that exercises require to be finished, and set daily goals that together represent the aim of a syllabus. Educational materials that are designed on the premise that learning is initiated and observed by the teacher in the classroom can be quite different from those designed for a student’s self-instruction or peer instruction. Certain methods demand the educational use of available materials, while others mandate different patterns of action in the classroom. Some prevent classroom interaction, and others are neutral about interaction in the classroom. Several materials require remarkably competent teachers with near-native capability in the target language, while others accept teachers who themselves barely finished an advanced English course (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 24-25).

According to Richards and Rodgers, *procedure* is the last concept in a method. It is the level to which the actions and practices held by a *method* are applied within the confinements of the classroom. *Procedure* has three aspects. The first aspect is the introduction of the new language and how it is supposed to be conducted during language teaching activities such as “drills, dialogues, information-gap activities” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 26). The second aspect is the exercises proposed for the study of the L2. The third aspect considers how responses and assessments are dealt regarding the students’ abilities in the L2. In essence, *procedure* centers on the way a method manages the assessments, the exercises, and the display of the L2 in the classroom. *Procedure* is the level that considers what teachers all over the world go through every day (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 26).

Richards and Rodgers suggest that only a handful of methods are clear regarding all the aspects mentioned before. Methods can appear under any circumstance; a good example is one where a teacher comes up with a new technique (in the level of *procedure*) that seems to be doing well in the classroom and afterward the teacher translates these findings into an *approach* that describes or explains the theoretical aspects of these new techniques. Other methods were created the other way around. First, the theory of language or language learning was established, and later the *design* was created as well as the techniques within *procedure* (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 29).

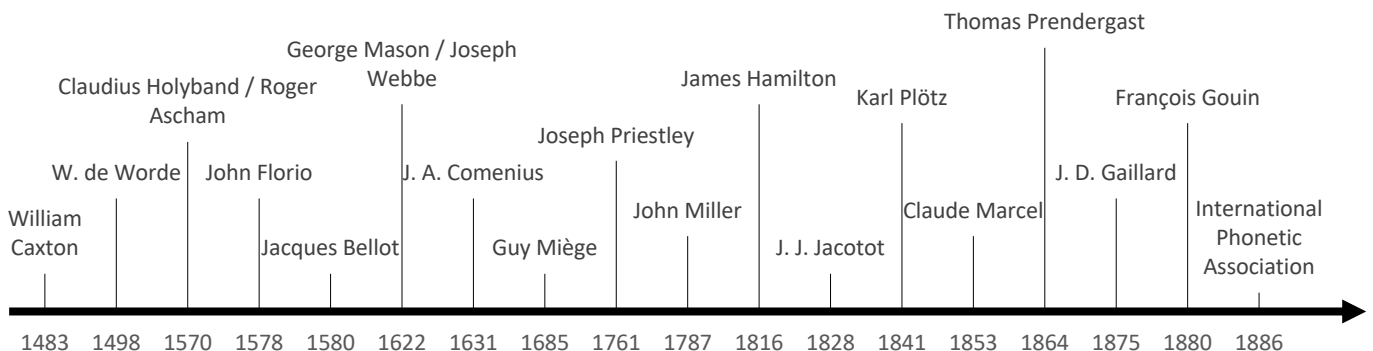
In this thesis, *method* will be considered an L2 umbrella that covers *approach*, *design*, and *procedure*. *My preferred teaching approach*, that will be presented later on, intends to cover all three levels and therefore holds, theoretically, all the characteristics necessary for a *method*.

3 Historical Background

3.1 From the Classical Method to the Grammar-Translation Method

Anthony Philip Reid Howatt, in *A History of English Language Teaching* (1984), presents an overview of the historical developments of ESL teaching. The book provides great insights into the views and beliefs held by content creators, teachers, linguists, and even psychologists when dealing with the subject. It clarifies that many of the present-day concerns in ESL teaching are not exceptionally new-found and that tradition has been one of the main guiding principles. After describing how methods are built, it is crucial to take a step back and examine how ESL teaching has been conducted since its initial stages in the early modern period.

Classical Method to Grammar-Translation Method



According to Howatt, in the sixteenth century, English was the main language of England, French was a prominent deed, and while Latin lingered as the symbol of an enlightened person, its grammar was the only one taught in school. It was not until the seventeenth century that a scholarly description of the English language was produced. In the lack of a syntactical account of the language, old language teaching materials, predominantly dependent on texts and dialogues, were transformed for the teaching of English. Dialogues were a deep-rooted convention in Latin teaching, in addition to question-and-answer techniques. These techniques came from a previous teaching design, regular in orate groups, where the objective was to learn literally written texts by heart (Howatt, 1984, pp. 3-6). Joseph **Priestley's** *The Rudiments of English Grammar* written in 1761 is a late but conventional model where it shows how the Classical Method made students put tremendous effort into memorization while the teacher only had to sit down and purely ask them the questions. A good example from the book on page 13 illustrates this. The teacher would ask "What is a verb?" and the students would answer "A Verb is a word that expresseth what is affirmed of, or attributed to a thing; as I love; the horse neighs" (Priestley, 1772, p. 13). The teacher would again question the students "How many kinds of verbs are there?" and once again the students would answer "Two; Transitive and Neuter" (Priestley, 1772, p. 13). At the end of the sixteenth century, the first ESL textbooks appeared, thanks to French refugees (Howatt, 1984, p. 6).

Howatt suggests that an appeal in learning the language appeared among people of the trade sector. Double-manuals seeking to teach English to French people and French to English people started flourishing. William **Caxton**, a member of the trade community in Bruges, organized and printed in 1483 a double-manual. His manual endorses the previous manuals, though it is bilingual and direct, not containing any linguistic information about either language. It has household tools, shopping lists (with

typical stuff you find on a market), a dialogue about selling and buying textiles of various types, words describing family relationships, etc. in summary texts intended toward vocabulary building for students. What is most fascinating about Caxton's manual is that he brings the L2 next to the L1. The following dialogue is a good example of this (Howatt, 1984, pp. 6-7).

A vostre pere et a vostre mere,	To your fadre and to your modre,
A vostre tayon et a vostre taye,	To your belfadre & to your beldame,
A vostre onlce et a vostre aunte,	To your eme & to your aunte,
A vostre cosyns et a vostre cosynes,	To your cosyns and to your nieces

(Caxton, 1483, p. 6)

Caxton is the first one who analyzed that daily language should be taught and that L2 should be given the same status as the L1. He puts the original text and the translation in the same line, which is less useful than what Caxton's assistant, Wynken **de Worde** did only 15 years later. He produced a similar double-manual called *A Lytell treatyse for to lerne Englysshe and Frensshe* (c. 1498). Contrary to his former boss, de Worde set the L2 and the L1 in interchanging lines (Howatt, 1984, pp. 7-8). The presumption is, that it makes a word by word translation much easier.

Here is a good boke to lerne to speke Frenshe
Vecy ung bon livre apprendre parler françoys
In the name of the fader and the sone
En nom du pere et du filz (de Worde, c. 1498, qtd. in Howatt 1984, p. 8)

Signs of a flourishing interest in the English language can be noticed in the form of multilingual *dictionaries and phrasebooks* that started to incorporate English as one of its main languages. The earliest is a 1540 dictionary, published in Antwerp, listed in the *Alston Bibliography*, which contains seven languages: Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, Dutch, High-Dutch, and English (Howatt, 1984, p. 8).

Howatt further states that in 1572, French refugees settled in England. Among these refugees, there were teachers. Three of these teachers made themselves noteworthy, namely Jacques Bellot, Claudius Holyband, and John Florio. The two small English manuals that Jacques **Bellot** wrote in the 1580s, *The English Schoolmaster* (1580) and the *Familiar Dialogues* (1586) reflect an important insight into basic literacy and daily dialogues. In *the Schoolmaster*, Bellot presents the English alphabet, pronunciation, some grammatical issues, and words that students would have some

difficulty with, such as “hole/whole, bore/boar, horse/hoarse or common ambiguities such as right, straight, and hold” (Howatt, 1984, p. 16). Presenting these words and clarifications in print provided insight to the students that had only learned the language in the streets (Howatt, 1984, pp. 12-16). His second book focuses more on a household environment, particularly shopping. He presents a long sequence of shopping scenes that last the course of a single day. After waking up and preparing the kids for school, the characters then drop by common shops, ending the day by having the neighbors over for dinner. The conversation during dinner focuses on recent topics and later the characters play games. What makes it important to ESL teaching is the fact that at in all these events, he incorporated a rough phonetic note of the L2 texts (Howatt, 1984, pp. 16-19).

According to Howatt, Claudius **Holyband** wrote two major textbooks, *The French Schoolmaster* (1570) and *The French Littleton* (1573). The two are also teaching manuals, and both adopt dialogues. The main distinction between these two books and Bellot’s is that it contains instruction on grammar and pronunciation. *The Schoolmaster* brings this information early and *the Littleton* in its appendix. They also have a vast vocabulary list. Holyband’s dialogues are presented like Bellot’s daily life situations, where considerable scenes are presented in sequence. These scenes come from many different backgrounds. One for example is school, and according to Howatt, they served their educational purpose quite well. Every scene is comprising of enough material for one lecture while keeping the context from one class to the next. The students read the text out loud, repeating it until they reached a fair pronunciation. Subsequently, the children wrote down the text from the L1 to the L2 and then from the L2 to the L1. Regarding grammar, Holyband consulted grammar rules only after the students had a very good comprehension of the texts. For him, grammar only fit a more elaborate course (Howatt, 1984, pp. 21-24).

Howatt describes the third of these refugee-teachers, John **Florio**, as someone who interprets language teaching differently. His two double-manuals, *First Fruits* (1578) and *Second Fruits* (1591) include dialogues in Italian and English. They contain, as the two authors before, something that later would come to be considered very important to future methods: situational themes. Situations such as getting accommodation and being in contact with a landlord are examples of that. As an intense student of language, Florio gathered lexicographical works and many proverbs in his books. The interesting takes from Florio’s works are the situational themes, the use of proverbs, and golden sayings. These aspects later, by the use of chunks, became essential to future methods (Howatt, 1984, pp. 25-27).

Howatt continues his analysis, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century, a tradesman from France called George **Mason** composed a handbook with the name *Grammaire Angloise* (1622). In it, he presented rough phonetic transcription of the conversations. What makes this important is that he gives notability to the verb form, progressive or continuous. This shows how the teaching and analysis of English grammar were growing apart from its Latin route (Howatt, 1984, pp. 29-30).

According to Howatt, a clear change in classrooms happened during the seventeenth century, a period where most young children attended grammar school to obtain elementary instruction on their L1. These students were immediately conditioned by Latin grammar books with no alternative but to memorize its rules and definitions, and if that did not occur, they risked physical repercussions. So, in such circumstances, many new and different ideas started to emerge during this period. The only thing that brought these new ideas together was the preference of text rather than rules. A good example is Roger **Ascham**'s book *The Schoolmaster* (1570) (Howatt, 1984, pp. 32-33). Howatt describes Ascham's *Schoolmaster* as a book directed exclusively to the education of a specific child, and that it is divided into two parts. The first part is named *The Bringing Up of Children* where he discusses the education, the reasons, and the goals of a noble child. He believed that by presenting the child with classical literature, it would eventually spark understanding and culture upon that child. In *The Ready Way to the Latin Tongue* (the second part of his book), he explains how to achieve the educational goals of the first part, within a pedagogical curriculum. The "double-translation" is the most popular procedure, where Ascham gives L1 and L2 the same status, helping the student understand the structure of the L1 and the L2, by presenting the L2's literature (Howatt, 1984, pp. 33-34).

According to Howatt, Joseph **Webbe** designed a language textbook called *An Appeal to Truth* (1622), in which he removed grammar altogether. He believed that grammar rules were inadequate in their portrayal of language and that by studying them, the students would lose valuable time. He then focused on exercising communication skills, believing that these skills would eventually lead to an understanding of grammar. He also believed that translation was important in L2 vocabulary building, but he did not agree with L2 word-by-word translation to L1, holding the belief that translation equivalence existed only at the level of the construction. He conditioned his method to this perception. Howatt brings Webbe in the same line, with the conditions of the later known Direct Method (Howatt, 1984, pp. 35-37).

As attested by Howatt, Jan Amos **Comenius** wrote two books, the *Janua Linguarum Reserata* (1631) and the *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, published in Nuremberg

in 1658. He saw education in an extremely specific way and used the metaphor of the Temple for his educational stages. The first stage was *Vestibulum*, the second *Janua*, the third *Palatium*, and the fourth *Thesaurus*. He visualized two textbooks, each with four stages (according to the temple stages). The first important observation regarding Comenius' work towards a better language teaching method is that in the *Vestibulum*, which only had a few hundred words designed for simple daily conversations, he added a list of additional words, acknowledging which words to focus on. In the *Janua* he increased that emphasis by essentially creating a school textbook central to the teaching of 8,000 words in a sequence of graded texts with a small dictionary being attached. The *Palatium*, which never came to light, was supposed to introduce the accurate use of language and style. Lastly, the *Thesaurus*, which also never came to light, would have been largely dedicated to the contrasting characteristics of the L1 and L2, and of course, translation. Comenius did not make great progress with his method, but he did come up with insights. In the *Vestibulum* he arranged Latin texts side-by-side to other languages in text. Another great insight of Comenius is that he started the section *The Accidents of Things* that focuses on teaching basic nouns by employing short constructions such as "The grass is green, The chimney is full of smoke" (Howatt, 1984, p. 42) and so on. The section called *Things Concerning Actions and Passions* focuses on verbs in the simple present tense. *Circumstantial Things* focuses on prepositional phrases and adverbs. And the final chapters address vocabulary building. He captured all the words he used in the texts and placed them in the *Index Verborum*. The *Solid Things* part is where he ordered in different topic categories, one hundred texts. The texts were short so the teachers could address them slowly in class and as a teacher Comenius knew that having the children around him, an early teacher-centric view of the classroom, made it easy for him to handle the class. He started every class focusing on the short text and only went on when he was certain that the students had grasped the content of the text (Howatt, 1984, pp. 40-44). Howatt continues his description of Comenius and his second book, the *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*. Here, Comenius makes usage of another great process in language teaching. He started each *Orbis* lesson with a picture which was linked to the words in the text. This shows that providing more input for the creation of a memory helped the students remember the words. In his view the teacher should start each class addressing the picture, and, when available, the teacher should provide the real object to the students. Not satisfied with it, he went a bit further and suggested that the students could draw or color the objects themselves. He also believed that the students could disclose their personal lives, feelings, and ideas in the classroom. Most of Comenius' suggestions were picked up for *my preferred teaching approach* (Howatt, 1984, p. 46).

In the second half of the seventeenth century, according to Howatt, a requirement for French native-speaking teachers arose in Britain. These French speaking teachers not only did their jobs, but they also focused on teaching ESL to the French-speaking refugees who were living in Britain at the time. There was a Swiss man among these French teachers named Guy **Miège** whose *Nouvelle Méthode pour apprendre l'Anglois* (1685) elevated ESL teaching to a professional standard. His *Nouvelle Méthode* was published by him and translated into English with the name *The English Grammar* (1688). The original book has 270 pages addressing grammar and dialogues and even incorporating a small dictionary. In the 119 pages addressed to grammar, he specifically focused on orthography and the pronunciation of English, as well as words forms and base paradigms. He believed that once the student had learned the fundamentals of spelling and sound systems of English, they would have a much easier time. Teaching the principles of pronunciation, grammar and spelling were fundamental to Miège as well as the teaching of phrases and dialogues. Some of these ideas were well incorporated into *my preferred teaching approach*. He also supported the idea of columns and braces to help understand visually and condemned the idea of learning a language leaving the grammar rules out in the beginning. Despite that, he allowed his students who were unwilling to learn grammar first, to memorize the texts before addressing the rules (Howatt, 1984, pp. 53-57).

Howatt continues his analysis into the eighteenth century. He states that something special happened during this time. The teaching of English outside Britain took off, creating the opportunity to develop different views on how to teach English as a second language. The Netherlands and France already had some sort of ESL teaching history, but in the second half of the eighteenth century, English took a giant leap. The growing interest in Germany on the works of Shakespeare set the country into a frenzy over the English language and became a breakthrough for the development of the Grammar-Translation Method. One of the earlier German works was Johann König's *Vollkommener Englischer Wegweiser für Hoch-Teutsche* (1706), a book that included everyday dialogues and a how to write a letter. A good example of the great interest among German authors in English prosody and phonology is Eber's *Englische Sprachlehre für die Deutschen* (1792). The appearance of a large number of grammars in this period led Johann Christian Fick, to write the first English teaching Grammar-Translation course in 1793, *Praktische englische Sprachlehre für Deutsche beiderlei Geschlechts, nach der in Meidingers französische Grammatik befolgten Methode*, published in Erlangen (Howatt, 1984, pp. 61-65, 132).

Another interesting aspect is that the first book to teach English in India was published in 1787 in Serampore, and printed by the author John **Miller**. *The Tutor* (short name of the book) starts with the English alphabet, moving to pronunciation using a phonetic technique, and followed by a vocabulary list that avoids erudite words. The grammar focuses mainly on practical discussions that are closely related to trade. A great take from this book is that it includes writing, and not just copying from an English text. The goal was to make the students reflect upon each construction (Howatt, 1984, pp. 67-68).

According to Richards and Rodgers, the mid-nineteenth century basically dealt with grammatical issues. They used sample constructions to explain the grammatical rules of the language. Organizing L2's morphology and syntax was the main focus of writers from this period. Oral and written exercises were almost non-existent. Karl **Plötz** is probably the most typical author of this time. In his textbooks, the only instruction was through translation. Typical constructions used by Plötz, and quoted by Titone were "Thou hast a book. The house is beautiful. He has a kind dog. We have a bread [sic]." (Titone, 1968, p. 27) (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 3).

In summary, all the described authors and methods have contributed to the so called **Grammar-Translation Method**, in which the main focus was reading and writing. This is a trend that, according to Richards and Rodgers, "dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 4). The integration movement between European countries opened opportunities for communication between citizens, demanding oral proficiency in the L2. By this, a market for books and phrasebooks that focused on conversation was created. These books were usually planned for private studies, but language teachers also addressed the way the L2 was being taught in public and private schools. The main points of the Grammar-Translation Method are the vocabulary selection chosen by the used texts, and the teaching/memorization of a bilingual word list. In this method, grammar is taught deductively, meaning that the grammar rules are presented, studied, and then practiced in exercises. The first language is used to explain the instructions, new items, and to teach (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 3-6). There have been many critical voices that clearly state the disadvantages of this method. Bahlsen, one of these voices, states that the problem with the Grammar-Translation Method is that committing "words to memory, translating sentences, drilling in irregular verbs, later memorizing, repeating, and applying grammatical rules with their exceptions" shows that this method does not teach the student how to think in the L2 but rather to memorize it (Bahlsen, 1905, p. 12). He even goes further and claims "that the everlasting rendition of foolish sentences had not

qualified us for independent expression in the foreign tongue” (Bahlsen, 1905, p. 12). In his opinion “any possible feeling for the foreign language had been systematically killed” (Bahlsen, 1905, p. 12). The missing communicative aspect with learning the pronunciation is one of the main disadvantages of this method. On the other hand, one advantage of the Grammar-Translation Method is that there might be less misunderstanding because of the native language is mainly used in the classroom.

According to Howatt, nineteenth century language teaching is one where the Pre-Reformers challenged the Grammar-Translation Method and made it more humane. The addition of L2 teaching into the school curriculum, the interests and demands of the market for an efficient language learning method, and the Reform were the main factors that elevated the L2 teaching in this period (Howatt, 1984, pp. 129-130).

During this new period, important authors such as Hamilton, Gaillard, Jacotot, Marcel, Gouin, and Prendergast distinguished themselves. Even if their ideas did not flourish, these men set the precedent for the Reform Movement that started in the 1880s. The pre-Reform Movement, according to Howatt, was based on the superiority of speech, the use of connected texts contrary to disconnected constructions, and the use of an oral methodology. As new views of language teaching started to appear and grow, ESL teaching rose in importance, and it became clear that the public-school system was not ready for these new views. These early reformers did not collaborate, and therefore each of them produced their own method, justifying it with a background thesis. Many authors appeared during this time, and one of them was James **Hamilton**, whose work brought back the idea of having the constructions translated in interchanging lines. Another important author is J. D. **Gaillard**, a French professor who found a teaching technique that was based on the theory of the association of ideas. His students would have to learn a series of words and phrases from memory, and when done, he would provide constructions with a missing link. The students would have to fill in using words or constructions that they had previously learned. This system is also used in *my preferred teaching approach* by asking the students repetitive ‘fill in the blank’ questions. Hamilton and Gaillard are only two examples of the teachers that appeared during this period (Howatt, 1984, pp. 147-150).

Howatt introduces Jean Joseph **Jacotot** as someone whose work emphasized the ideological significance of education and language teaching. His main contribution came after he took a teaching position in a Flemish-speaking area of Belgium. He requested his students to get copies of Fénelon’s *Aventures de Télémaque* with a translation into Flemish. Since he didn’t speak Flemish and his students were native Flemish speakers, he adopted the students’ L2 as the only language in class, becoming

one of the first to establish an L2 monolingual teaching method. Here he had two great ideas for classroom teaching that makes him noteworthy. The first was to let the students know the frequency in which words in a text appeared, and the second was to use contemporary literature. As he was incapable of translating or explaining since he couldn't speak Flemish, he would read the book's first construction aloud, and then he would ask the students to look in the book for the same words that he had just read. Then he let them search for the words of the next construction and so on. A laborious task for students, but according to Howatt, this prompted them to memorize the text. He would ask questions about the text similarities, and observations that the students had made. He would also form and test some hypotheses, letting the students unravel how language works. These ideas not only let Jacotot acknowledge that explanations were unimportant, but that they were indeed inaccurate. According to Howatt, Jacotot believed that every individual had an innate ability to learn language and he stated that in 1830 in his *Enseignement universel, langue étrangère*, more than a century before Chomsky and his theory of Universal Grammar. Jacotot assumed that the job of a teacher was to answer the student, (another glimpse of an idea that would later be the foundation to a student-centered method) and not conduct the students through explanations (Howatt, 1984, pp. 150-151). Most of Jacotot ideas are present in *my preferred teaching approach*.

When addressing François **Gouin**, Richards and Rodgers focused on how he established an approach to L2 teaching, and that it was based on the perceptions he had while observing how children used language. He saw description as the main booster of language learning and that by describing a situation, previously lived, the child would excel. With this in mind, he developed a method that had themes and situations as its main *procedures*. He focused on presenting new items within context. These great insights, added by his use of gesticulation to explain the meaning of new vocabulary, are some of the main ideas that *approaches* and *methods* such as the Situational Language Teaching and Total Physical Response use (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 5-6). Howatt talks about one major work of Gouin, *The Art of Teaching and Studying Languages*, published in Paris in 1880. This book's main idea is that language follows a structure like one portraying an event (something already observed by other methods). According to Howatt, he came to this idea after seeing his nephew describing his experience at a corn mill. He acknowledged that his nephew employed language to organize and understand his own experience. Leading him to employ experience to establish and order the capacity of his language. Gouin then assumed that sequentiality was the main attribute of experience, leading him to believe that language is nothing more than a series of

smaller events. Howatt stated that Gouin developed four particular advantages when performing exercises based upon these principles. First, he considered that each construction that expresses a new fact is not an ordinary repetition. Second, he wondered if the effort on the natural repetition strengthened the knowledge of the words. Third, he also wondered if this same repetition, the recurrence of the same sounds, assured good pronunciation. Most importantly, the student, after all these repetitions, having a growing sense of security, would turn his or her attention upon the verb. Gouin saw the verb as a major force in a construction. To understand this, he repeated the verb at the end of each construction, making it more memorable to the students. Gouin's work grew into a reasonable principle in language teaching, yet it was limited to configure an overall method. His series became an important component of the Direct Method (Howatt, 1984, pp. 161-167). The use of gestures, the centrality of the verb, and the understanding that language ability grows by a description of past situations, are accounted for in *my preferred teaching approach*.

Howatt acknowledges Claude **Marcel** as someone who wanted to make reading the priority in L2 teaching. In his main work called *Language as a Means of Mental Culture and International Communication* (1853), Marcel makes extensive use of pictures. He proposes that teachers repeat similar expressions and make use of looks and gestures to establish meaning. These are previously established *procedures*, but what makes him worth mentioning is that during the development of his program, he detected difficulties while trying to teach all at the same time. With that in mind he acknowledged that once the written words were learned, the students required little practice in hearing to be able to understand the words when they were spoken. One of the central ideas of *my preferred teaching approach* is the pursuit of teaching the four skills at the same time. Understanding the written word can appear to students at the same time as the spoken word (Howatt, 1984, pp. 148-156).

Thomas **Prendergast** wrote *The Mastery of Languages, or the art of speaking foreign languages idiomatically* in 1864. Howatt states that his insight over children's usage of their environment helped the children understand the constructions that were presented to them. The daily usage of these constructions helped the children express themselves. Howatt states that Prendergast pursued the idea that students had to learn the most basic structural patterns occurring in the L2. Bearing that in mind, he used detached constructions to teach his students. To Prendergast, the key to language was the human ability to produce an infinite number of constructions from a finite set. According to Howatt he was not the first to propose the generative principle, but he was the first to propose its usage in language teaching materials. Next, he noticed, that

children acquired 'chunks' of language, and to mix them with other constructions to sound fluent. Prendergast did not give much explanation to this fact, but it is important to acknowledge that he identifies 'chunks' as something important in language learning. He then disclosed that for an L2 teaching system, to obtain any level of success it needed to contain only memorized constructions, and that they had to be studied to the point of immediate evocation. His argument against the memorization of these constructions was that it would be impossible to learn all the constructions in a language. He suggested then that the students should learn (keeping in mind that this occurred in 1865) the most frequent constructions used in the language. He came up with constructions that would have as many basic rules of the language as possible. Howatt comments that "it is remarkably similar to the frequency-based lists of the twentieth century applied linguists" (Howatt, 1984, p. 158). Prendergast developed his method on this basis and gave a small collection of these constructions to the students to learn them, then the students were given the assets for creating hundreds of constructions following the model established within these first constructions. At the end of the book, he provides a diagram that allows the student to create around 250 new constructions (Howatt, 1984, pp. 156-161).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

His servants saw your friend's new bag near our house.

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

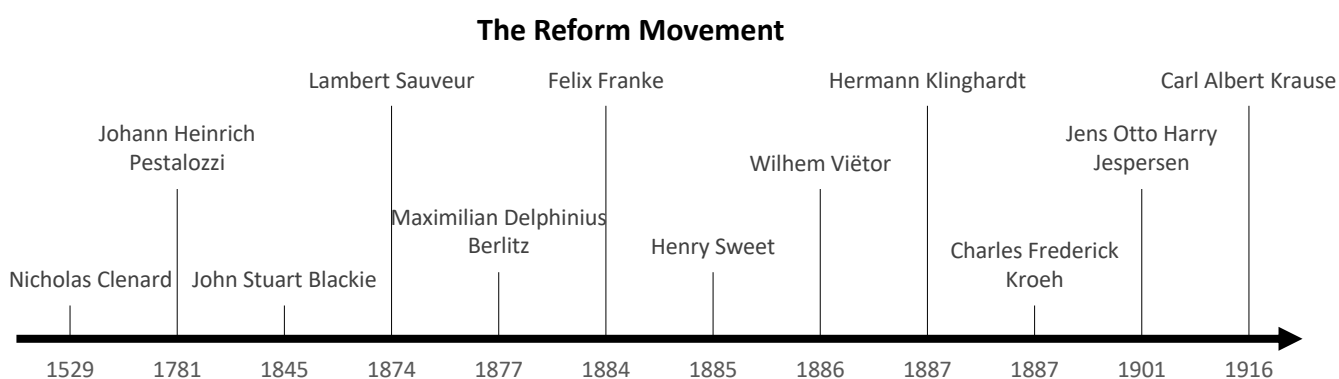
Her cousins found my sister's little book in their carriage. (Prendergast, 1864, p. 223)

Two examples would be: 1.12.13.14.17 (His cousins found my book) or 11.12.3.4.5.7. (Her Cousins saw your friend's bag). Howatt continues his description of Prendergast's work by stating that when it came to his teaching methods, he comprised it to seven stages. In the first stage, the students would have to learn by heart five or six huge constructions that would account for about a hundred words. His goal was to achieve fluency and perfect pronunciation of these constructions. Translations were allowed and grammar was put aside. In the second stage the student started writing, stages three, and four focused on acquiring more constructions out of the two models, and the last stages focused on reading and speaking. Prendergast is a great inspiration to *my preferred teaching approach*, as he set, from the beginning of his studies, the necessity of a well leveled educational material that would be compact, simple, with a well-chosen vocabulary (Howatt, 1984, pp. 159-161).

At the beginning of the 1880s, according to Richards and Rodgers, linguists such as Henry Sweet and Wilhelm Viëtor, initiated the introduction of academic work that was necessary to qualify what the Reformist's proposed. At this time, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was created by the recently founded, International Phonetic Association (1886), providing new impressions over speech practices. One of its objectives was to spread the teaching of modern L2, and to achieve that, it recommended, the study of phonetics (to institute proper pronunciation), the use of dialogues (to present conversational constructions and chunks), the logical introduction of grammar in the early stages, and a teaching method that would build connections between L1 and L2. All these characteristics, in one way or the other, influenced all the methods that followed, including *my preferred teaching approach*. Some have fallen to disregard but others are still very much alive (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 7).

3.2 The Reform Movement

According to Howatt, the Reform Movement took place in the late nineteenth century. For around twenty years, the prominent contemporary phoneticians had the same goal, to bring teachers and others into the field. Pamphlets, articles, new journals, and periodicals started to appear around 1882. These focus on phonetics occurred because two of the three main influencers of the movement were phoneticians – Viëtor in Germany and Jens Otto Harry Jespersen in Denmark, the third, Henry Sweet stayed a secluded intellectual who only taught private and individual students (Howatt, 1984, p. 169).



At the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, this movement reached its pinnacle with two works that collectively stated its classroom practices, fundamentals, and aims. The first was Sweet's *The Practical Study of Languages* published in 1899. In it, he states that it aims to guide the fundamentals for a rational method of L2, and to understand the many changes these common fundamentals had to go through in order to adapt to contrasting situations and students' diversity (Sweet, 1899, p. v). According

to Howatt, the Reform Movement would have failed without **Jespersen's** work, *How to Teach a Foreign Language* (1904, originally published as *Sprogundervisning* in 1901), to counter-balance Sweet's impersonal accomplishments. As mentioned before, the Reform Movement was established on three concepts: related texts to the teaching practices, the priority of discourse, and a method that focuses on speaking skills. Even if the concepts were contrastively understood by sometimes antagonistic scholars, there were no disputes over the Movement's key goals. This unit points towards the same goal that gave profoundness to the Movement's educational objectives (Howatt, 1984, p. 171).

In 1886 **Viëtor** published a paper called *Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren!* and this was among others, one of the starting points of the Direct Method. In it he states, that even if a student knows the best grammar and the most comprehensive dictionary, he still has not learned a language (Viëtor, 1886, p. 5). According to Richards and Rodgers, Viëtor dooms in this book the Grammar-Translation Method and treasures the instruction of teachers in phonetics. Further, he states that speech patterns were the essential features of the language and because of that, phonetics' instruction was primordial to give teachers a more correct articulation of the language (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 8). Howatt describes Viëtor's book *Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren!*, as predominantly accessing the spoken language. Viëtor talks about how classrooms were filled with teachers whose pronunciation was already deficient and who have almost abandoned speech. Viëtor used coherent texts over worthless constructions that were used in other textbooks, but Howatt draws attention to the fact that it was hard to choose and grade such texts. As a text-based approach, the texts needed to set up the base of grammatical rules instead of just showing the rules in worthless constructions. Another main concept of his method was how important he made oral exercises in the classroom. He set all the oral exercises at the beginning of the learning process. As Viëtor points out, by providing the texts with a question-answer system, the students are forced to use the L2. It was required from the teacher to communicate in the L2 as the means of classroom conversation, employing the L1 only to present new words and to introduce new grammar (Howatt, 1984, pp. 171-173). According to Howatt, Viëtor's subtitle to his *Quousque Tandem* pamphlet, *Ein Beitrag zur Überbürdungsfrage*, examined how schools and their mental overload and sickness from overstraining homework gave the reformist their views. In it, he analyzes the excessive amount of homework students had and he confidently suggested that homework should be limited to the idea of memorizing books, rhymes, lyrics, and so on. For such purposes, he wrote a series of texts in association with Dörr called *Englisches Lesebuch* in 1887 (Howatt, 1984, pp. 171-172).

Howatt states that science became the essential grounds of accomplishment and advancement during this period and that the Reform Movement provided language teaching its scientific approach. Among Henry **Sweets'** important works were the *Elementarbuch des gesprochenen Englisch* (1885), an ESL book addressed to German students, as well as the English equivalent (*A Primer of Spoken English*), and *Primer of Phonetics* (1890), a book that eventually emerged as a standard in ESL texts. In his most important book *The Practical Study of Language*, Sweet described concepts for the advancement of a teaching method. These included a meticulous selection of what was to be taught, specifying boundaries, a solid understanding of phonetics, and an early focus on speaking rather than reading (Sweet, 1899, p. preface). As Howatt adds, Sweet barely touches the subject of education and L2 teaching in this book (Howatt, 1984, pp. 179-184). That is consistent with what he wrote in the opening pages of the book: "I am not much concerned with such questions as, Why do we learn languages? [...] our first business is to find out the most efficient and economical way of learning them." (Sweet, 1899, p. 2). *The Practical Study* was designed to be a pragmatic and continuous method of language study that combined the teaching and learning of L2 in schools and a far-reaching view of the entire subject. Howatt describes the book as split into three parts. The initial chapters stresses speaking skills, focusing extensively on the teaching of phonetics, using transcriptions, and application in L2 teaching. The next chapters are comprised of methodological ideas and practices which include dialogue, vocabulary, grammar, texts, and translation. After chapter seven, the focus of the book changes to incorporate Sweet's views over a greater system of linguistic pedagogy. According to Howatt, he viewed language teaching as a marriage between linguistics and psychology, and his psychological take, *associationism* was the one predominant at the time. *Associationism* mandates that the student's role is to make associations between what was learned about language and the real world, and to obtain fluency in the spoken language meant a well-performed association. Word-lists and single constructions were unsuitable and rejected, as both went against the core of *associationism*. Howatt suggests, based on Sweet, that only a well coherent written text, with well-connected constructions, could make the associations merge in the students' brain. Only after that should the teacher address grammatical and vocabulary issues. This idea became known in the future as the 'inductive' teaching of grammar. The book ends with a series of essays on distinct concerns (Howatt, 1984, pp. 179-185). In later methods, single constructions played a distinct role, establishing a connection between texts and grammar. The inductive approach required teachers to get grammatical examples from the texts. Sweet understood the importance of employing natural texts in the classroom.

He assumed that the textbook writers generated good natural texts that were simple enough to be coherent to an elementary school student without twisting the language by pushing it into prearranged grammatical categories. There was no reason for teachers to struggle with texts that contained every single aspect of English language grammar (Howatt, 1984, p. 186). According to Howatt, Sweet's ranking of text logic was a condition to the type of the text. He started with descriptive ones, went through narratives, and ultimately ended in dialogues. Descriptions, in his opinion, have a "direct, clear, simple, and familiar" (Howatt, 1984, p. 186) touch that satisfied his four main principles for teaching texts well. Narratives were also an important feature, assisting the text to stay balanced. Sweet, as described by Howatt, thought that dialogues were the hardest ones because they use modal verbs, and the format of question-and-answer. The dialogue was for him the final-goal of classroom teaching, not its starting point. His vocabulary building is based on everyday language and objects (Howatt, 1984, pp. 186-187). Sweet viewed the process of acquiring an L2 as different, and a reproductional impossibility, as to the process of acquiring an L1. This interpretation with his comprehension of a rational, steady vocabulary building, and his consideration on the amount of words necessary for L2 vocabulary are shared with *my preferred teaching approach*. According to Howatt, Sweet created a curriculum comprised of different stages. The first one was the *Mechanical Stage*, where the student only used phonetic transcriptions and learned how to pronounce the words well. This stage took as long as necessary. In the second stage, known as the *Grammatical Stage*, the students focused on texts, vocabulary building, and a growing understanding of grammar. The third, *Idiomatic Stage* focuses exclusively on vocabulary building. Stages four and five, *Literary* and *Archaic*, focused on philology, and literature. Sweet believed that only at stage four students could start writing and using normal orthography, without hurting their pronunciation. Nowadays, this curriculum looks a bit too linguistic, probably due to the fact that Sweet's students were not real people, just abstractions, whose mood and dedication did not fluctuate from lecture to lecture. As reviewed by Howatt, Sweet's preoccupations for his students were real, but a perfect classroom, with the perfect environment, the perfect teacher, the perfect student, where everything goes according to plan, does not exist (Howatt, 1984, pp. 187-188).

Sweet became so influential that in the spring of 1887, Hermann **Klinghardt**, a teacher from Silesia, followed up a review of Sweet's 1885 paper *Elementarbuch des gesprochenen Englisch* with a firmly established study in 1888 of a year's work concerning the new method called *Ein Jahr Erfahrungen mit der neuen Methode* (A Year's Experiences with the New Method) (Howatt, 1984, p. 170). Howatt outlines that

Klinghardt's investigation lasted from the spring of 1887 until March of the next year. He also describes that the project was split into two semesters, April to September and October to March with two breaks. The experiment contained only English beginners, all fourteen-year-old male students, with a three-year experience studying French. Klinghardt started the experiment with a two-and-a-half-week presentation on the pronunciation of English. He created exercises for speaking and listening, while presenting the students with the phonetic alphabet. This phase was comprised of ten hours of phonetics, four lessons a week, having the first text begin in the third week of the course. Every construction was written on the blackboard since the students could not acquire the book for themselves. In the beginning, the constructions were written on the board, and after, when the constructions became too long, he changed the textbook. As pronunciation was paramount, the students carefully listened and repeated the constructions that the teacher was reading out loud. The students repeated the construction until they sounded fluent. The students also wrote the constructions down in the new alphabet. The meaning was noted with an *interlinear translation* and once it was all acquired, the grammatical features were debated and explained. The constructions included many grammatical features but only one was chosen for teaching intents. The lexical items that were left were to be taught in a future part of the experiment. When the students had a firm grasp of the text, Klinghardt started to instigate the grammatical features (Howatt, 1984, pp. 173-175). According to Howatt, later on, Klinghardt instructed the students on asking and answering questions regarding the texts. He let the students broaden their questions and answers to issues concerning their personal experience. Klinghardt shifted to normal orthography at the start of the next semester, substituting the *Elementarbuch* to the *Gesenius*. The new book brought longer texts and contained famous world tales. It is at this time that writing was presented. Students would copy the texts and write answers to questions. After this year's experiment, the students had developed an understanding of the L2 and noted by Howatt, the outstanding accomplishment came from how well the students were speaking the L2 (Howatt, 1984, p. 175).

Richards and Rodgers argue that the reformers assumed an oral-based methodology, making it clear that students had to hear the language first, before reading or writing it. They also stated that words should be shown in constructions, and these constructions should be applied in relevant contexts, and in this context, the principles of grammar should be learned. The translation was to be avoided, even though the L1 could have been used to explain L2 new words or to test understanding. All of these concepts are considered the roots of applied linguistics. Unfortunately, and as pointed

out by Richard and Rodgers, all of these projects did not progress to the status of a *method* or a consistent *design* for L2 teaching, but they did lead to the ideas of the Natural Method and eventually to the evolution of what came to be recognized later as the Direct Method (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 8).

According to Howatt, alongside those who attempted to employ direct or natural concepts to language classes in the nineteenth century, two authors and descriptions are worth mentioning in this thesis. The first is Johann Heinrich **Pestalozzi** who preached a gentle, interactive approach to learning, that avoided everyday memorization, and to that, he offered an idea that consisted of providing a system of elementary constructions. He fell short once the constructions failed to deliver adequate stimuli to the students. It is Pestalozzi that gives *my preferred teaching approach* the main characteristic, short constructions. The second contributor, suggested by Howatt, during this time was Lambert Sauveur. His use of an energetic oral interaction in L2 is worth mentioning because it is something that is the base of many classroom teaching methods to this day, and also because it became known as the Natural Method (Howatt, 1984, pp. 197-201).

In 1887 Charles Frederick **Kroeh**'s published a paper called *Methods of Teaching Modern Languages*. In it he stated that there was no better method during that period of time for the teaching of L2 than the Natural Method. A striking characteristic of Kroeh's article, and in some way justifies a theory of the nature of L2 learning in *my preferred teaching approach*, is the idea over L2 learning that Kroeh makes "Besides the conditions will never again be the same as those under which he learnt his mother tongue. His own mental organism has changed. He [...] has developed [...] the faculties of comparison, reasoning and generalization" (Kroeh, 1887, p. 179). According to Howatt, the ideas in the Natural Method are shared with other methods such as the Communicative Approach and especially the Direct Method. These methods together configure a group known as the Communicative Language Teaching. The *approach*, *design*, and *procedures* of all these *methods* have changed throughout time, but the idea that learning an L2 is not a logical, coherent procedure that can be structured by someone in a *design* has persisted. These methods hold conversations or interactions as their foundation, and they believe that the L2 has to be taught as the L1 and to achieve fluency by having "someone to talk to, something to talk about, and a desire to understand and make yourself understood" (Howatt, 1984, p. 192).

Later on, Howatt describes how in 1869, Sauveur and his business partner Gottlieb Heness settled and opened a language school in Boston. It thrived, and after a few years, both published their ideas and experiences in two papers. Only **Sauveur**'s

paper, *An Introduction to the Teaching of Living Languages without Grammar or Dictionary* (1874), endured. Sauveur's publication was initially planned as a sort of manual for teachers that would supplement his schoolbook *Causeries avec mes élèves* (1874). According to Howatt, *Causeries* (Conversations) may have corresponded to several discussions or dialogues that happen during his lectures. Sauveur's first lecture allegedly included more than a hundred words, which he claimed that the students understood after only two hours. In his first lectures he addressed the parts of the body, making use of gesticulation to provide the meaning of the new words to the students, a feature that is also incorporated in *my preferred teaching approach*. What makes him worth mentioning is that he was able to talk to his students in a way that they understood what he was telling them, even if they did not understand every single word. The most appealing parts, described by Howatt, of the *Introduction*, are his tips on dealing with the students in the matters of *procedure*. He believed that this way of presenting the subject to his students was the center of all 'natural methods' and could not be replaced by just having the students talk to the teacher or each other during the lectures. He developed two basic concepts out of this belief. One of these concepts was to have the teacher and/or the students ask simple questions that they did not know the answer to it, a good example would be 'What's the time, please?' or 'Is it raining outside?'. *Coherence* was Sauveur's second concept. Students recognized what he wanted because they were able to follow the conversation (Howatt, 1984, pp. 198-201).

According to Richards and Rodgers, Felix **Franke** wrote in 1884 a book called *Die Praktische Spracherlernung: Auf Grund Der Psychologie Und Der Physiologie Der Sprache Dargestellt*, in which he backs the idea that there is a correlation within meanings and forms in the L2. Contributing to the theoretical justification of an ESL approach that only uses the L2. Franke states that a vehement usage of the L2 in the classroom is beneficial to the students. Teachers were not to explain grammar, they were to encourage it, to motivate the students toward the usage of the L2, and with time the students themselves would become capable to extrapolate the grammatical rules. Three main issues of this method are worth mentioning. The substitution in the initial stages of the textbooks by teachers, the concern to an immaculate pronunciation, and finally the teaching of new L2 vocabulary through known words with, for example, the help of mime and pictures. These notions are the bedrock of the Direct Method and they are also in some way included in *my preferred teaching approach* (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 9).

The ideas of the Direct Method were not new, they had been applied before and a good example of their employment in early 'natural methods' of teaching is given by

Howatt when he introduces the works of John Stuart **Blackie**, a Latin and Greek nineteenth century scholar. According to Howatt, he incorporated an account of eighteen-steps of an early 'direct method' set by Nicolas **Clenard** in the sixteenth century on his Latin lectures. This article was published in 1845 by the *Foreign Quarterly Review*. In steps one to four, the teacher began using objects, describing them aloud, pronouncing their names, and getting the students to repeat them. The blackboard was used to write down the new words and to study variations. In step five, the writing was introduced, while step six prolonged listening exercises with short classes that presented things that could be explained easily in simple constructions. On step seven, grammar came to light, or presumed by the students from previous constructions and lectures. Step eight until eighteen were the second part of the program which comprised of a reading program, on subjects that were interesting for the students, and that was adapted to the level of progress they had (Howatt, 1984, pp. 194-197).

According to Howatt and Smith, the compilation of methods now called 'Reform Methods' did not have this name initially, although the Direct Method was "used as a label for what was going on in schools" during this time (Howatt & Smith, 2014, p. 84). Between 1901 and 1902 the French government's resolution that ordered the focus of spoken language across the school system used the term now known for the first time as the **Direct Method** (Howatt & Smith, 2014). As described by Richards and Rodgers, two exhilarated sympathizers of the Direct Method, that had already spread around Germany and France, brought it to the United States. It became extensively known in the New World because of its employment by Berlitz in his private language school. In his language school, he designed educational materials that used everyday constructions and terminology that were to be carried out only in the L2. In small classes, teachers and students practice conversations and pronunciation through a well organized and leveled question-answer scheme. He did not address grammar at all, hoping that the students would grasp its rules by its usage. He used, as Nicholas Clenard did in the sixteenth century, objects to help the students grasp the meaning of the new words, while conceptual words were learned by connecting to already familiar words. He highlighted the speaking and listening skills, as well as correct pronunciation and grammar, even if they did not explain the latter (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 9-10).

Howatt takes into account the *Official History of the Berlitz Organization* written in 1978, to present the works of Maximilian Delphinus **Berlitz**, a German native speaker, who opened a language school in the United States. After he set up the school, he admitted a few students and looked for a speaker of French who could help him. Berlitz felt ill but before falling ill he found a recent French immigrant named Nicholas Joly, who

did not speak English at the time. Joly had to take over the business while Berlitz recovered. A month later and suspecting to find his students in a very discontent mood, Berlitz found Joly talking in French to his students, which, according to Howatt were making remarkable progress. This set of events encouraged Berlitz to establish new language schools, first in America and then in Europe. His textbooks assumed that the teachers he employed could work correspondently to an expected routine, that all Berlitz schools followed. Berlitz, following the Direct Method principles, has to be recognized by how well he put basic L2 material together, something that really inspired *my preferred teaching approach*. His focus was on his two-basic level coursebooks, providing students with an important base of the L2. All his books followed the same design: no translation to the L1, question-and-answer exercises, steady attention to oral work, and grammatical explanation were to be avoided until advanced levels. He did not give too much attention to teacher's training, since he only employed native speakers (Howatt, 1984, pp. 204-207).

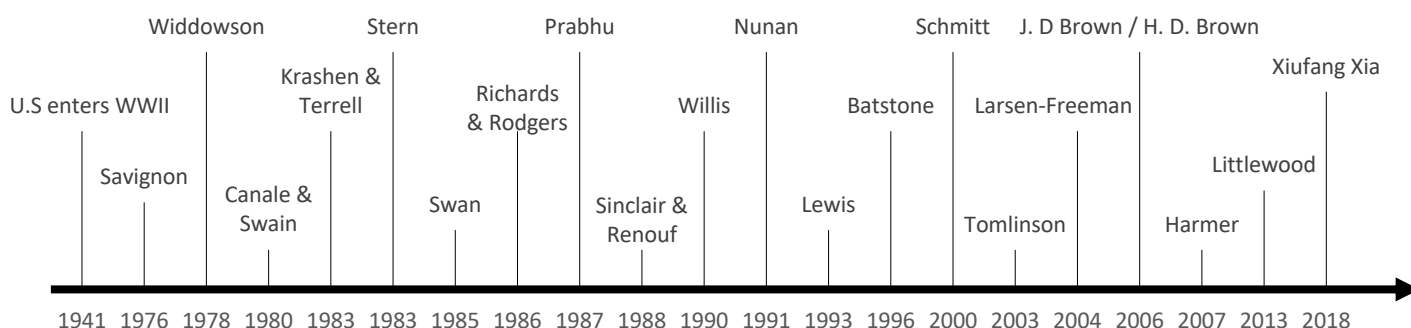
In summary, the **Direct Method** can be seen as the answer to the dissatisfaction with the Grammar-Translation Method with only teaching, writing, and reading skills instead of focusing on communication in the target language. According to Hans Heinrich Stern, historically, especially in France and Germany, the language teaching reform in the second half of the nineteenth century tried to make teaching more effective and usable in comparison to the Grammar-Translation Method. In this time a lot of new teaching methods were developed (Stern, 1983, p. 456). Diane **Larsen-Freeman** states, that the "Direct Method has one very basic rule: No translation is allowed." (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, p. 23). It is characterized by only using the target language for instructions and communication in the classroom, as the first language has to be avoided (Stern, 1983, p. 456). As Carl Albert **Krause** wrote in 1916, the Direct Method applies a direct appeal to the learner through the foreign language, meaning it teaches the language and not only about the language. The main point according to him is to develop reading skills by employing oral facility and competence (Krause, 1916, p. 101).

The Direct Method is considered to have many disadvantages. According to Richards and Rodgers, the Direct Method needed native speaker teachers or people who knew the L2 as well as their L1. It is a method that does emphasize a well-structured educational material but not the teacher; very often teachers were not good enough in the L2. Some pointed out that heavy conformity to the basic principles of the method was usually inefficient, making teachers come up with ingenious ways to avoid using L1, when a quick clarification in the L1 would have done the job (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 10-11). According to Stern there are more major problems with the Direct Method.

One is how to give proper meaning without translation, and how to avoid misunderstandings without using the L1. Another problem addresses how advanced students can benefit from using the Direct Method (Stern, 1983, p. 460). According to this, there are also vocabulary limits, especially when a direct association with the meanings is not possible. The advantage is that it provides the possibility to get confidence in speaking the target language and enables students to achieve good oral fluency skills. It also enables the participation of students and it reduces the gap between theory and practice.

Regardless of the pressure from supporters of the method, Richards and Rodgers state that the Direct Method found difficulties absorbing it into the American public education system. It was often cited as lacking a foundation in applied linguistic theory. When the 1920s arrived, the method had progressively been altered into *designs* that integrated grammar exercises that follow the ideas of the Direct Method. A famous study in 1923, **The Coleman Report**, determined that there was no single method that could secure results. Trying to focus teaching on speaking was ruled out due to the lack of time the students had in the classroom. The report also mentions how L2 teachers were not well prepared for the task and it recognized that the focus on speaking was worthless because of the lack of contact American students had with foreigners. With this lack of enthusiasm with speaking, the focus moved to reading. *The Coleman Report* backed this new focus stating that soft and professionally managed vocabulary building in combination with some grammatical structures and explanations was necessary. These views of the report are accounted for in my *preferred teaching approach* (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 11).

3.3 From the Audio-Lingual Method to the Lexical Approach



Contrary to other methods developed mainly in Europe, the **Audio-Lingual Method** has its origins mostly in America. Its influence on language education in other parts of the world is unquestioned, although not without critical and skeptical reactions,

in Britain and Germany (Stern, 1983, p. 462). In 1941 in his speech 'Day of Infamy', the president of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt declared that a state of war existed between the United States of America and the Empire of Japan (Roosevelt, 1941). This meant that the U. S. government and its military needed to equip its staff with fluent speakers, interpreters, translators, code room assistants, and other jobs that involved its enemies' languages, especially German and Japanese. For these specific wartime efforts, a new and unique method to teach L2 was indispensable. Thus in 1942 a scientific method called the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), also known as the Audio-Lingual Method, was developed. It was created, in order to teach languages quickly and effectively to Americans (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 44).

According to David Nunan, this method has probably one of the strongest influences on foreign language teaching of all methods. It is associated with a "technology of teaching" and "based on 'scientific' principles" and well-developed classroom pedagogy (Nunan, 1991, p. 229). Structural linguistics and behaviorism were at its core. Skinner, a behaviorist who worked on the advancement of the Audio-Lingual Method, was influenced by the theoretical and empirical work of Pavlov and Watson. Skinner applied Pavlovian concepts of animal behavior to the research of human behavior and called this new concept "operant conditioning" (Nunan, 1991, p. 229). The fundamental skills, such as listening and speaking have priority according to Stern. Like the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual Method is oral-based and it aims to create language skills without using the L1 (Stern, 1983, p. 464).

According to Richards and Rodgers: "When reading and writing are introduced, students are taught to read and write what they have already learned to say orally." (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 59). They state that dialogues are a good medium for memorization and that the right intonation, rhythm, stress, and speech should be the teacher's main devotion during classes. Once the dialogues were learned by heart, grammatical rules were picked up from the dialogues and studied using exercises that focused on pattern (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 59). Richards and Rodgers state that the basic classroom technique is pattern. Therefore, the basic construction pattern and grammatical structures had to be identified. This basic construction pattern with its intensive oral drilling in combination with systemic attention to pronunciation are the basis of the language teaching process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 52). Nunan argues that human-beings could be taught over a technique of reinforcement. The right usage of a feature would get an encouraging response while the incorrect usage of that feature would get negative feedback. In the Behaviorist view, this system of reinforcement is a crucial aspect. The Audio-Lingual Method considers that students

needed to be taught the L2 straightway, without the usage of the L1 to clarify new terminology. The Audio-Lingual Method follows the Direct Method in this matter. It also tries to explain realia, which is the use of real-life material, and pictures through the use of mimicry. According to Nunan it is the perfect method for new teachers, or teachers who are not confident, because they can rely on the material (Nunan, 1991, pp. 230-232).

Larsen-Freeman, an American linguist, presented in her book *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*, the *approach, design, and procedures* of the Audio-Lingual Method. She presents it in a format of how a class in the method would be conducted. In the beginning, she makes a parallel with the Direct Method, but she makes clear that the Audio-Lingual Method uses grammatically built constructions, within a situational context. She uses the example of a teacher presenting a dialogue and asking the students to repeat it almost non-stop. It is clear throughout the chapter that conditioning is considered a useful instrument in this method, in other words, “to respond correctly to stimuli through shaping and reinforcement” (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, p. 35). The teacher has an important role in this method and should be a good model, especially for pronunciation, in order for students to be able to mimic the model. Therefore, the method tries to form in the students a new habit. To create a new habit repetitions are used. Learning rises with the strength of this new habit, but errors have to be avoided because they cause bad habits. It is the teacher’s responsibility to immediately correct occurring mistakes. On the other hand, positive reinforcement helps to create correct habits. Another point of this method is that the students should use the L2 in their classroom communications. Acquiring structural patterns helps students to learn the new language, and vocabulary is introduced through dialogues. Grammar is taught through examples and drills, and not by providing its rules (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, pp. 42-45). *My preferred teaching approach* absorbs the main positive aspect of the Audio-Lingual Method, with its focus on listening and speaking with the correct pronunciation. On the other hand, a disadvantage of the Audio-Lingual Method is that it does not give equal importance to speaking, listening, reading, and writing, a topic that is central to *my preferred teaching approach*.

According to William Littlewood in his paper *Developing a Context-Sensitive Pedagogy for Communication-Oriented Language Teaching*, 2013, the origins of the **Communicative Language Teaching** can be found in the 1970s, when the global market expanded and the need for interaction between different cultures rapidly developed (Littlewood, 2013, p. 1). Stern in his book *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, states that with all these new interactions happening “the key

concept [...] in educational linguistics and language pedagogy is that of communication or communicative competence” (Stern, 1983, p. 111). In her 1976 paper *Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice*, Sandra Joy Savignon explains that communicative competence is the way native speakers know and interact in their mother tongue. She goes into more details describing how a native speaker knows exactly how, what, and when to say something. This includes a background of the whole cultural context, as well as “the roles of the other participants and a host of non-verbal communication cues such as distance, posture, gestures, facial expressions.” (Savignon, 1976, p. 4). A parallel can be made between the early thoughts of Charles F. Kroeh over the conditions that the L1 and the L2 were to be taught. Savignon’s opinion posits that “verb forms, use of prepositions, noun endings, word order, pronunciation” and so on, do not matter when it comes to interactions (Savignon, 1976, p. 4). Accuracy in the use of all these features “is not essential to communicative competence” (Savignon, 1976, p. 4). At the end of her paper, she gives an advice to teachers, “communication must be a personalized, spontaneous event. It cannot be programmed” (Savignon, 1976, p. 20). She finishes it with a note of encouragement stating that if teachers are willing to put an effort, they can manage to create such circumstances (Savignon, 1976). In *my preferred teaching approach*, the analysis of the comparison over the L1 and L2 is not made. It focuses on understanding how L2 can be taught and how L1 can be of use to help in the process.

Taking a closer look at what communicative competence is, Canale and Swain wrote about three main principles of communicative competence: “grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence” (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 28). Grammatical competence “will be understood to include knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology” (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 29). Sociolinguistic competence comes with two rules, the “sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse” (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 30). Strategic competence is basically the means that people find when language is not working, verbally, and non-verbally (Canale & Swain, 1980, pp. 29-31). A question-answer-example from Widdowson shows the difference between grammatical and sociolinguistic competence: “A: What did the rain do?” and the answer: “B: The crops were destroyed by the rain.” (Widdowson, 1978, p. 25). The answer is not wrong, but it also does not match perfectly.

Harmer suggests that students should talk in groups over their own experiences, and the teacher should be stimulating them to focus on the learning process, while learning the L2. The Communicative Language Teaching core is realistic communication

in the classroom. It also stimulates role-playing games such as news programs, a scene at the airport where the student's ticket is accepted, and many others. It uses activities that require sharing information such as writing a poem or inventing a story together. No matter what the classroom activity is, they should all aim for communication (Harmer, 2007, pp. 69-71). According to Richards and Rodgers, several kinds of activities and exercises can be used in this approach, for the teacher to create an authentic conversation scene, with information sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interactions. An important medium for that is realia. This can be accomplished by the usage of online articles, advertising, journals, periodicals, or other things that can forge real-life occurrences, such as pictures, signs, etc. (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 80-81). The teacher should allow mistakes to give the students fluency, and to help them integrate other means of communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 173). According to Krashen (1982) "language acquisition occurs when language is used for what it was designed for, communication" (Krashen, 1982, p. 1). Further, Richards and Rodgers state something fundamental:

"Krashen sees acquisition as the basic process involved in developing language proficiency and distinguishes this process from learning. Acquisition refers to the unconscious development of the target-language system as a result of using the language for real communication. Learning is the conscious representation of grammatical knowledge that has resulted from instruction, and it cannot lead to acquisition." (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 161-162)

Larsen-Freeman also gives an example of a Communicative Language Teaching experience in the classroom, reinforcing the ideas previously presented. She states that the priority lies in enabling students to convey conscientiously in the L2, and that everything should have a communicative intent. The students should be able to say one construction in several different ways, while learning how to choose the most appropriate form. She analyzes the teacher's role in the classroom as more of an adviser and counselor during the activities than a traditional teacher. The teacher answers questions and monitors the student's activities. Larsen-Freedman expands on issues such as homework, mistakes, and the usage of L1 and L2. According to her, to enhance students' understanding of the L2, homework should focus on real issues, such as listening or watching a debate online. The students L1 may be used to a certain degree, but the L2 should always come first, not only in the exercises but also when explaining activities and homework. Mistakes should be identified and allowed by the teacher through oral exercises and corrected later with an activity designed specifically for that purpose. She

suggests that mistakes are a natural consequence in the improvement of communication skills. Teachers are presumed to establish communication through situations that encourage students to communicate. Larsen-Freeman continues by stating that there are many accessible activities, like games, role plays, problem-solving, and so on. The opportunity to use real materials is crucial to comprehend language as it is used, and to present an actual setting. Students should be enticed to share their ideas and opinions with others (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, pp. 125-132).

Critiques over the Communicative Language Teaching exists. Michael Swan for example, states that structural or functional syllabus should be privileged, and by putting the understanding of a language over the structure, it may lead the students to a serious gap in their knowledge of grammar. He also states that “the classroom is not the outside world, and learning language is not the same as using language” (Swan, 1985, p. 82). This approach might be difficult to implement, especially with large classes. One teacher cannot overview every single working group in a classroom. This might be exhausting for the teacher, even if the teacher is experienced and confident. *My preferred teaching approach* focuses on the idea of learning how to use a language quickly, encouraging students to put more effort into the learning process, while keeping the motivation high.

In 1987, N. S. Prabhu, an English teacher and language specialist, while working in Bangalore, India popularized the teaching of **Task-Based Language Teaching**. According to him, the central idea was that if a teacher makes students perform a meaningful exercise, they will learn the language while performing that task, in other words, learning the L2 without focusing on language forms. Prabhu defined a task as an “activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process” (Prabhu, 1987, p. 24). According to this definition, reading a railway timetable or following instructions are a meaningful task. He identifies three central groupings of meaning-focused exercises that he called *information-gap*, *reasoning-gap*, and *opinion-gap*. The information-gap tasks provide and share essential information that contains “decoding or encoding of information from or into language” (Prabhu, 1987, p. 46). This occurs, for instance in group work, where the teacher gives insufficient information to different groups of students to get them to exchange, combine, and transfer information with other groups. The reasoning-gap tasks focus on getting information through activities, like supposition, deduction, and practical reasoning. The opinion-gap tasks have in their core the student’s personal preferences, feelings, or attitudes. He believed that it is through discussions about personal issues that the students will use facts or raise ideas to justify their opinions (Prabhu, 1987, pp. 46-47).

Nunan wondered about the difference between Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching. His answer was that the Communicative Language Teaching “is a broad, philosophical approach to the language curriculum that draws on theory, and research in linguistics, anthropology, psychology and sociology. [...] Task-based language teaching represents a realization of this philosophy at the levels of syllabus design and methodology” (Nunan, 2004, p. 10). Accordingly, Task-Based Language Teaching can be seen as a branch of the Communicative Language Teaching. Richards and Rodgers also comment on the similarities between the Communicative Language Teaching and the Task-Based Language Teaching. The parallels come in situations where real communication is essential for language teaching, as well as in activities where coherent language is essential for the success of the tasks. There is a great variety of definitions of “a task”, but common ground exists according to Richards and Rodgers, “a task is an activity or goal that is carried out using language, such as finding a solution to a puzzle, reading a map and giving directions, making a telephone call, writing a letter, or reading a set of instructions and assembling a toy“ (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 223-224).

While completing a task, students are, in Harmer’s opinion, focused on language form instead of structure or function. He sees the Task-Based Language Teaching as a problem-solving situation that the students have to face. He wrote about three conventional steps of the Task-Based Language Teaching. The pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. The pre-task step is comprised of questions, vocabulary testing, and initiation on the topic. The cycle step is when the teacher observes from a distance the students executing the tasks in small bunches. After the task is completed, the students organize how they will present their findings to the other students. In the language focus step, the students have to analyze, practice, check and discuss (from the texts, dialogues or audios that they were given) some of the aspects that they found important (Harmer, 2007, pp. 71-72).

Larsen-Freeman analyzed a lesson performed by Prabhu using the Task-Based approach. The lesson started by making it clear to the students the desired result and the goal of the task. While in the pre-task, the teacher showed how the exercise should be performed, by individually performing a similar one, thus introducing the necessary language to complete the exercise. Students were observed in order to know if adjustments were to be made by the teacher. The teacher made it clear that the task was to be performed in groups. The teacher then gave different instructions to each student, forcing the students to combine and exchange information to finish the exercise

they were asked. In the end, the students had to show their findings to the entire class how they saw fit (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, pp. 146-148).

The Task-Based Language Teaching shows advantages when it uses real-live situations which might help students increase their enthusiasm, and when it presents small groups of students working together. It also encourages students to talk freely in the L2, while expressing their opinions and ideas without the fear of committing errors. One disadvantage is that it is for more advanced teaching levels than for beginners. A little bit of language understanding and oral skills are necessary. *My preferred teaching approach* absorbs the encouragement the Task-Based Language Teaching gives to students to talk without fear in the L2.

The **Natural Approach** appeared in the 1970s. It is a collaboration between Tracy Terrell, a teacher of Spanish and Stephen D. Krashen, a famous American linguist and educational researcher, whose five hypotheses (the acquisition/learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis) were the philosophical base of the Natural Approach. In 1983 Krashen and Terrell wrote and published the book *The Natural Approach* (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, pp. 128-133).

Larsen-Freeman addressed the fact that when the authors named their approach Natural Approach some people assumed that the Natural Approach and the Natural Method were the same. As explained before the Natural Method, or Direct Method, assumed that language would be taught with a lot of enthusiasm in the classroom, and that teachers were to motivate direct and improvised use of the L2. It can be stated that the Natural Approach shares certain aspects of the Natural Method. Students were to extrapolate the rules of grammar, and the focus was to be on speaking from the start. There was a concern to pronunciation, and familiar words, mime, pictures, and demonstrations were to be used to teach new vocabulary. Some of these characteristics were assumed by the Natural Approach which focuses on developing communication skills by exposing the students to everyday language situations (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, p. 107). According to Larsen-Freeman, the Natural Approach proposes an interesting strategy, the 'low affective filter'. It consists of using new vocabulary that is just a little beyond the student's level to reduce the students' anxiety to talk, creating self-confidence on students while talking in the L2. It is advantageous if the teacher is as expressive as possible and that the teacher makes sure that the input is comprehensible (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, pp. 107-108).

In H. D. Brown's description, the Natural Approach is based on the principle of communication. In order to accomplish such task, it directs itself to daily language

circumstances. These theories believed that there is a silent period in every student's acquiring process of the L2. During this period, the teacher is asked to speak in the L2, going just a bit further beyond the students' knowledge. Once the students feel comfortable enough in the L2, which should come naturally, they will start speaking in the L2 (Brown, 2006, p. 77). Finally, according to the authors of the Natural Approach, Krashen and Terrell, the students only had to produce in the L2 when they felt ready. Mistakes were allowed and only corrected when there was a big problem in communication. The grammatical issues would come in the form of homework where they would be checked in class and addressed. As in previous methods presented here before, this one focused on letting the students talk by presenting conversational exercises from the beginning. All new information given should be understandable and should always arouse the students' interest. Leaving the teacher to use realia, images, and the student's experiences, the exercises should not be grammatically organized nor grammatically oriented (Krashen, 1982, pp. 137-139; Krashen & Terrell, 1998). These ideas, while not new, had a great impact on ESL teaching. In *my preferred teaching approach*, these advancements made by the Natural Approach are present through allowance of mistakes, the use of images, and letting the students talk in the L2.

Michael Lewis first described the **Lexical Approach**, at the beginning of the 1990s with its key concept revolving around grammaticalized lexis, rather than the other way around (lexicalized grammar). He stated that speech comes before writing, success in language learning is more than just accuracy, and the students should be made aware of chunks from the beginning (Lewis, 1993, pp. vi-vii). The Lexical Approach bases itself on word frequency. Instead of focusing on grammar, notions, or functions it uses Corpus linguistics to identify and select the most common words and combinations of words, also known as chunks. The research made in Corpus linguistics has allowed the creation of texts based on the most frequent words and chunks to be used in language teaching. The usage of these texts is one of the main characteristics of *my preferred teaching approach* (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 132).

In 2003, Tomlinson stressed that if students started paying attention to some of the features of language used by proficient speakers, they would get a better performance in that language. His idea was that the students who notice a feature, would have that same feature "more noticeable in future input", so contributing "to the learner's psychological readiness to acquire that feature" (Bolitho, et al., 2003). Schmitt (2000) makes a significant contribution when he presents the idea that our mind keeps chunks as a whole, stating that it is easier for our mind to recall a chunk as one piece of information (Schmitt, 2000). Rob Batstone, from the Institute of Education of the

University of London, believes that the search for chunks within a large text, and the absorption of meaning and form, takes too much time from the student's initial contact with the L2 (Batstone, 1996).

According to Richards and Rodgers, corpus linguistic studies have brought together collocations and chunks, making linguistic-based texts for the classroom. This allows them to teach vocabulary more productively (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 132-136). Xiufang Xia published a paper called *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* and states that the use of chunks assists students to become fluent in a language. The chunks are seen by the brain as one, allowing students to focus their attention on the structure of a construction, rather than focusing on individual words (Xia, 2018).

David Willis dedicated time to the assignment of identifying the most common patterns and meanings in the English language. He established a research which involved the collection and analysis of more than 7,3 million English words. Later, this research grew to around twenty million words. The computer analysis revealed that the "700 most frequent words of English account for around 70% of all English text" (Willis, 1990, p. vi). This result led Willis to decide that the 700 most frequent words should be with their most common patterns. He based his course under this idea (Willis, 1990, pp. v - vi).

The modern lexical syllabus is discussed in a draft paper by Sinclair & Renouf (1988) called *A lexical syllabus for language learning*. In this draft paper, the two authors suggest that the main benefit of a lexical syllabus is that it emphasizes utility, leaving the student to learn what is most valuable because it is the most frequent (Sinclair & Renouf, 1988).

Larsen-Freeman describes the Lexical Approach as less concerned with student's production and more focused on comprehensible input. The teacher, especially at lower levels, talks to the students without the expectation of a response. Further, students should work on exercises and with activities to get an idea of the lexical features of the L2. It is about getting familiar with multi-word lexical items and expressions (Larsen-Freeman, 2008, p. 108).

Lewis stated that the current teaching methods are quite alike for advance students as well as for beginners (Lewis, 1993, p. vii). The Lexical Approach does not fall into this category. According to Richards and Rodgers, the Lexical Approach is still to be merged with language teaching. It is still not considered a method because it lacks the levels of *design* and *procedure* (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 138).

My preferred teaching approach understands that an L2 cannot be taught exclusively by lexical units and collocations. This is certainly not sufficient, but to

completely exclude such an important part of English it would be unwise. *My preferred teaching approach* sees chunks as something that the students will pick up along the way, as they continue to learn constructions and to read books they inevitably will come across chunks.

4 Research

4.1 Research Goals

Following the analysis of many of the methods that appeared in the history of ESL teaching, it is safe to say that many of the studies tested by teachers, students, psychologist, and linguists give a solid foundation to a more objective method. Some methods present an *approach* that does not match the *design*, and others have *procedures* that are not realistic with respect to the environment. The goal of *my preferred teaching approach* is to develop an objective approach of ESL teaching that strengthens the habit of reading books, backed by constructions previously learned without the context of the book. To validate some of the features presented in this new approach, a test was created. This test was performed by first grade students in Brazil.

4.2 *My preferred teaching approach*

4.2.1 Procedure and Participants

The test consisted of a pre-test on day 1, of lessons on day 2, 3, 4 and 7 and a post-test on day 8. The pre-test took place on August 28th, 2018 and the post-test on September 04th, 2018. The test was performed at the *Objetivo Campestre* school, a private elementary school, located in a middle-lower class district of Santo André, a city located in the greater metropolitan area of São Paulo, Brazil. The participants were fourteen first-grade students (nine female and five male), all having their fifth birthday before July of 2018. In Brazil, children attend the first grade at the age of five.

	August, 2018				September, 2018			
Date	28/8/2018	29/8/2018	30/8/2018	31/8/2018	1/9/2018	2/9/2018	3/9/2018	4/9/2018
Days	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	Pre-test	Lesson	Lesson	Lesson	Weekend	Weekend	Lesson	Post-test


The Brazilian school calendar usually starts on February 1st, and by the time the students performed the test they had already attended approximately 100 to a 125 school

days or 5000 to 6250 minutes of English classes (each around 50 minutes) before the pre-test. During this period (from the first of February) in their Portuguese classes, the students were taught how to read and write in their L1. In their English classes they were taught the alphabet, the days of the week, the months of the year, numbers, the names of animals, songs and so on.

To perform the test, a Power Point presentation with all instructions was given to the teacher. It started with information about the theoretical background of the test, followed by a short briefing of linguistic principles, and why the constructions were chosen. The constructions used in the tests and lessons were based on the principles of vocabulary building and frequency. English grammar was not taught during the lessons.

The pre- and post-test contained both the same 15 exercises, each with three possible multiple-choice answers (constructions) and a picture, which fitted and described the scene. All exercises and constructions were presented to the students in a Power Point presentation already mentioned and in a printed version. The question on top of the three multiple-choice constructions was always “*Choose the sentence according to the picture*”. The teacher gave the explanation and instructions in Portuguese and the constructions were read aloud in English only. During the pre- and post-test there were no translations given, only during the lessons in between. The students were informed about the test and how it worked, and that it was a multiple-choice test, and they were asked to highlight the known words of the pre-and post-test. The teacher told the students that every question was to be shown, read aloud by the teacher, and they were not supposed to talk to each other. The tests should not have taken more than fifteen minutes. They were given one example to clarify what they were supposed to do, as shown by the following example:

Example



15) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) The girl has long hair.
- (b) The ball is blue.
- (c) The television is on.

[15]

During the four (day 2-7) lessons between the pre- and post-test, the teacher taught the most common verbs, through sixteen constructions daily, to the students. All together there were 64 constructions. Only simple constructions were used, with a NOUN-VERB-ADJECTIVE structure. Every student received the material with all constructions in hand before each class. Each lesson followed the same pattern (as

described in the next chapter). On day 8, the post-test was performed in the same way the pre-test was.

The pre-test, the lessons in between as well as the post-test were presented with different teaching techniques at the same time: **listening** (the teacher read the constructions aloud), **reading** (all students had a printed version of the material in front of them), **speaking** (they repeated what the teacher said, this only occurred during the classes between the pre-test and the post-test), **writing** (they were told to “draw” the word, only in the lessons in between), **translation** (only in the classes between the pre-test and the post-test) and **visual stimuli and coloring** (each constructions came with an easy and relatable picture which in the lessons between the kids were asked to color them). All these important aspects were in the same exercise with focus on the constructions. The usage of all the stimuli at the same time is one of the issues that may help to create a memory. Another important issue is that students were to grasp the meaning of the **verbs in a two-construction context**. This means that the same verb in the same tense was used twice in two different constructions. When translating it, the teacher was asked to use only the exact word-to-word translation and not to translate them within the context.

4.2.2 Theoretical Background

The research *design* began on the premise that students learn second languages by creating memories within each word, and as the occurring frequency of that word increases, the stronger the memory of that word becomes. Having that concept in mind, this research aimed to create a method and a supporting test that would analyze such issues. The theoretical background to this test and method is presented in its *approach*, *design*, and *procedure*. Its *approach* to a theory of nature of language is based on the functional view described by Richards and Rodgers. This view emphasizes the semantic and communicative aspects over grammar. The *procedure* was explained in the previous chapter.

Having the method laid out, it is time to address the test. It was created to analyze some of the concepts that account for the *design*. The first concept to be addressed is the one about the verbs, nouns and adjectives that were to be used in the constructions of the test. This was managed by the usage of corpora. The influence and the number of corpora created in the last years have grown. Many authors have defined corpus as a gathering of genuine language texts that exemplify an assortment of a language. In other words, corpus linguistics helps linguists, teachers, and students analyze texts stored in computers, enabling them to make their own observations about a language.

The corpora used to create this test was the British National Corpus (BNC):

“The British National Corpus (BNC) is a 100 million word collection of samples of written and spoken language from a wide range of sources, designed to represent a wide cross-section of British English from the later part of the 20th century, both spoken and written.” (Homepage BNC)¹

Further it is explained that the broadness of written sources range for example “from regional and national newspapers” to “specialist periodicals and journals for all ages and interests, academic books and popular fiction” and “many other kinds of text” (Homepage BNC). The test is based on three different queries made using the BNC. It accounts for the most frequent verbs, nouns, and adjectives found on the restrictions set by the British National Corpus. The restrictions on the query on the BNC account for 26 different children’s texts which means a total of 517,990 words. The query on the British National Corpus was made on August 3rd, 2018 (see screenshot 1-4 in the Appendix, created via Homepage BNC). The most frequent verbs were deemed crucial for the understanding of the English language, therefore the combination of verbs, nouns, and adjectives obtained from the BNC corpus for the formation of the constructions were all based on a hierarchy that had the verbs on top.

¹ Data cited herein have been extracted from the British National Corpus, distributed by the University of Oxford on behalf of the BNC Consortium. All rights in the texts cited are reserved. <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml>. Last accessed 08.04.2020.

The following words presented in *Figure 1*, were used to form the constructions in the test.

Verbs		Nouns		Adjectives	
01. was	6,72%	01. time	0,82%	01. good	2.00%
02. said	4.20%	02. miss	0.81%	02. old	1.98%
03. had	3.13%	03. mrs	0.71%	03. little	1.82%
04. 's	2.30%	04. mr	0.70%	04. other	1.53%
05. do	1.95%	05. way	0.63%	05. long	1.15%
06. be	1.95%	06. people	0.63%	06. small	1.12%
07. have	1.67%	07. eyes	0.57%	07. great	1.05%
08. is	1.58%	08. head	0.56%	08. right	1.01%
09. did	1.54%	09. door	0.54%	09. big	0.97%
10. were	1.52%	10. face	0.52%	10. white	0.97%
11. could	1.33%	11. boy	0.49%	11. sure	0.81%
12. would	1.20%	12. day	0.48%	12. black	0.77%
13. 'll	1.03%	13. house	0.45%	13. new	0.72%
14. are	0.95%	14. things	0.42%	14. large	0.68%
15. 'd	0.92%	15. school	0.42%	15. young	0.68%
16. see	0.92%	16. man	0.40%	16. nice	0.62%
17. know	0.85%	17. room	0.39%	17. dark	0.61%
18. been	0.84%	18. honey	0.38%	18. whole	0.61%
19. get	0.84%	19. hand	0.37%	19. sorry	0.60%
20. go	0.83%	20. thing	0.36%	20. open	0.58%
21. got	0.83%	21. mum	0.34%	21. bad	0.57%
22. can	0.75%	22. woman	0.32%	22. red	0.56%
23. looked	0.75%	23. dog	0.32%	23. wrong	0.56%
24. 've	0.72%	24. dad	0.31%	24. dead	0.54%
25. 'm	0.71%	25. voice	0.30%	25. better	0.53%
26. 're	0.71%	26. water	0.30%	26. poor	0.53%
27. thought	0.64%	27. back	0.30%	27. strange	0.52%
28. come	0.64%	28. night	0.30%	28. cold	0.51%
29. going	0.63%	29. mother	0.29%	29. different	0.49%
30. think	0.59%	30. bit	0.29%	30. real	0.48%
31. went	0.58%	31. father	0.29%	31. best	0.48%
32. came	0.55%	32. table	0.28%	32. full	0.47%
33. put	0.50%	33. hands	0.28%	33. green	0.47%

Figure 1: presents the results of three different queries ran in the BNC. The percentage is calculated separately and shows how often the word appeared in the 26 books that cover the query. The first shows the results of verbs, the second the nouns and the third the adjectives.



1) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) The girl was in school.
- (b) He said a black table not a white table.
- (c) I had a large and nice house.

Figure 2

As an example, for how the constructions were built, question number 1 (Figure 2) of the tests is above. It shows a picture on the left side of a schoolgirl carrying a backpack and a lunch box. The correct answer is option A “The girl was in school”; the words that come close to be identified by the student would be “girl” and “school”. Option B gives the construction “He said a black table not a white table” and option C gives the construction “I had a large and nice house”. The correct average answer by the students to question number 1 in the pre-test was 66.6% and the post-test was 86.6%. This could mean that it was an easy construction to understand and memorize. The other 14 exercises follow the same concept and can be seen in the appendix of this thesis.

The second concept of the test is five lessons between the pre- and the post-test with daily practice of 16 constructions. The first construction (Figure 3) created was “She was in school”.

A screenshot of a language learning software interface. At the top right is the FAU logo. The main content area shows two illustrations: a girl with a backpack and lunch box on the left, and a school building on the right. Below the illustrations, the sentence "She was in school." is displayed. The word "was" is highlighted in a light blue box. Below this, the sentence "She WAS in school." is shown, with "WAS" in all caps. At the bottom, four options are listed: "ELA", "ESTAVA", "NA", and "ESCOLA". The word "ESTAVA" is highlighted in red. The date "21.12.2018" and the number "29" are visible at the bottom of the interface.

Figure 3

The chosen word “was” is the most frequent verb (6.72%) according to the BNC query. The personal pronoun “she” is under a picture of a girl holding a lunch box while wearing a backpack (this picture will repeat itself six times; in two other instances, two other different pictures for “she” were used to create new memories). The noun “school” is also under a picture, and it is the 15th most frequent noun (0.42%).

As described before, the verb was written in a format that could be overwritten by the students and the word-by-word translation was read aloud by the teacher. Seeing the word written, listening to it, reading to word-by-word translation in interchanging lines, and “drawing” the word would have helped students to create a memory of the word. As this happened to all constructions, the idea behind it was to create a pattern for what to do and what word to focus on. In the next step, the verb was shown isolated in red with its exact L1 translation and two questions (*Figure 4*).

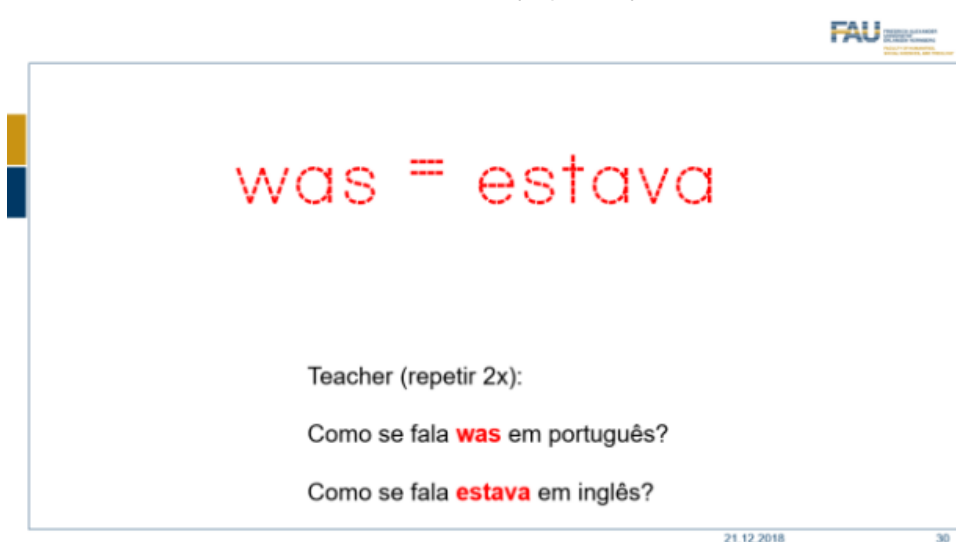


Figure 4

The teacher repeated the questions twice in the L1 with changed position of the new translated verb. “Como se fala *was* em português?” and “Como se fala *estava* em inglês?”. Which means: “How do you say *was* in Portuguese?” and “How do you say *estava* in English?”. This process was repeated with each single verb presented to the students in all the 63 following constructions.

The third concept is the one that deals with the drawings and pictures presented in the test. After an attempt by the author of creating the drawings by hand, it was suggested the usage of images obtained via the internet (see Image Bibliography and Appendix).

4.3 Results and Errors

The pre- and post-test results in *Figure 5* (per student) and in *Figure 6* (per question) show the percentage increase or decrease in the “Results” column. The pre-test results show an average of 62.4% of correct answers and after four lectures and one week later, students show an increase of 1.4% reaching 63.8%. This is not a significant increase, and possible factors may include the printing quality, choice of the pictures, and the lack of time for each exercise. Additionally, this test serves as a preliminary overview, and the scores would benefit from a syllabus or extended classroom time.

Student	Pre-test 28/08/2018	Post-test 04/09/2018	Results
Frederico	5	6	20%
Luiz Felipe	11	11	0.00%
Rafael	10	7	-30%
Julia	8	7	-12.50%
Luiz Otavio	9	8	-11.10%
Livia	6	9	50%
Rebeca	8	9	12.50%
Mariana Souza	12	11	-8.30%
Marcela	12	11	-8.30%
Sofia C.	8	11	37.50%
Manuella	10	10	0.00%
Emanuelle	9	11	22.20%
Manuella Vilaba	12	12	0.00%
Daniel	11	11	0.00%
Total	131	134	1.40%
	62.40%	63.80%	

Figure 5 shows the results per student with the percentage increase or decrease in the "Results" column

Questions	Pre-test 28/08/2018	Post-test 04/09/2018	Results
First question	10	13	30.0%
Second question	14	12	-14.3%
Third question	10	6	-40.0%
Fourth question	10	12	20.0%
Fifth question	8	13	62.5%
Sixth question	11	11	0.0%
Seventh question	12	13	8.3%
Eighth question	5	3	-40.0%
Ninth question	8	9	12.5%
Tenth question	7	10	42.9%
Eleventh question	5	3	-40.0%
Twelfth question	8	6	-25.0%
Thirteenth question	3	6	100.00%
Fourteenth question	10	8	-20.0%
Fifteenth question	10	9	-10.0%

Figure 6 shows the results per question with the percent increase or decrease in the "Results" column

The results presented by the test did not show any significant improvement. It cannot be said that the lessons in between improved the overall outcome. No student achieved to answer all 15 constructions of the pre and post-test correctly. The best result per student was twelve correct answers. The results of the pre-and post-test do not seem to be connected or follow a certain pattern. Some questions had better results in the post-test than in the pre-test, some the other way around. Question number 2 for example ("Miss Good is a young teacher.", see Appendix) was answered by all 14

students correctly in the pre-test, but only by 12 in the post-test. It can be assumed that the overall efficiency at the current stage of *my preferred teaching approach* is limited.

One of the reasons why some students have lower results in the post-test than in the pre-test might be the printing problem that occurred with questions number 3, 12 and 13 in some of the tests. As an example, *Figures 7 and 8* show the exact same question number 3 in the post-test of different students.



3) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) I know a small and dark room.
- (b) We are little people.
- (c) I see an old and strange door.

Figure 7



3) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) I know a small and dark room.
- (b) We are little people.
- (c) I see an old and strange door.

Figure 8

The chosen pictures present a second issue. Question number 3 (*Figure 7*), and question number 8 (“They’ve been poor their whole lives.” see Appendix), contain a difficult construction and picture for the students to assimilate, thus stressing the importance of an easy and comprehensive picture with the desired constructions.

Question 14 (*Figure 9*) is ambiguous when presented with the constructions A and C, the picture could fit both constructions. On construction A the word “head” and in construction C the word “park” is presented. This confusion may have caused a decrease on the number of correct answers in the post-test. Also questions 8 and 11 had pictures too ambiguous for young students to perceive their difference (see Appendix). All students were asked to circle the words they knew but only one student consistently did so.



14) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) My dad has a big head
- (b) It's better to be wrong
- (c) We went to the park.

Figure 9



11) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) It is a cold night.
- (b) It was dead.
- (c) He thought it was real.

Figure 10

When these issues are counted, and the results analyzed, it becomes clear that the constructions with pictures that were complex, ambiguous, and had printing problems presented the lowest scores. Question 11 (*Figure 10*) is the best example. The picture given to the verb “think” in its past form “thought” in the construction is quite a hard one for five-year-old child to associate. It should only have been presented in the test and explained during the classes but not proposed as the correct answer in a test. Another clear mistake was the number of times that each verb was presented to the children. Based on this we can assume that it takes more than two occurrences to ensure that a verb is retained in the memory. However, this would have made the test a bit longer, which was not a possibility, but it would have provided the opportunity to see how many constructions are needed for a verb to be understood and retained in memory. It is also problematic that some used nouns were not in the list created with the help of the British National Corpus.

The 51st and the 52nd constructions presented in the lectures between the tests were supposed to have 'RE instead of ARE. Contractions should have been considered. Two constructions with the verb “put” were not presented to students during their lectures and yet the verb was used in the pre- and post-tests. Another setback was when the “d” was treated as “had” and not as “would”.

The results in the pre-test vary from 5 correct answers to 12 correct answers per student. The question-by-question comparison states that some questions had problems of comprehension and therefore led to low scores. Questions with cognates and clear pictures were understood quite easily by students. During the compilation of the

constructions, mainly with the lesson ones, some creative liberty was taken. Having verbs as the center of all constructions made the author unintentionally leave out some nouns and adjectives that were on the list compiled from the BNC.

Some students had lower results in the post-test than in the pre-test. The reason for this may also lie in the errors already explained, such as the bad print, the misleading pictures and so on. The teaching approach has space for some efficient changes and improvements.

5 Discussion

Having the already addressed methods, approaches, and authors, it is now possible to observe how small changes over a long period of time have had a major impact on the way that ESL teaching is conducted in today's classrooms. The manner in which ESL methods were presented in this thesis shows that one method evolved from the other, and that no method came to light from the mind of any one genius. The Classical Method, with its focus on the translation of texts, grammar, and drill-learning of vocabulary, evolved during a long period of time, leading to the Grammar-Translation Method and its focus on L2 usage for explanations, translations, literature, and grammar. The Grammar-Translation Method evolved into the Direct Method. The Directs Method's frequency and repetition practices in the classroom, the refraining of the L1, the allowance only of the L2, everyday spoken language, and students learning by associating meaning directly in English were the rule. The Direct Method evolved into the Audio-Lingual Method, which acquires some characteristics from it, such as repetition and drilling. It brought to light the Behaviorist theory, which postulates that humans can be trained through a system of reinforcement, such as listening and speaking drills and pattern practice. Taking some characteristics of the Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method, Communicative Language Teaching came to existence. It proposes that the teacher should encourage the students to see the language pragmatically, to mediate meanings for a purpose, and to do things which resemble in some measure what they do with their L1. Communicative Language Teaching evolved into Task-Based Language Teaching, acquiring most of the approach of Communicative Language Teaching, but focusing on the use of genuine language and letting students do meaningful tasks with the L2. Task-Based Language Teaching did not evolve into the Lexical Approach but many of the characteristics of it came from other methods, and from the technological advancement in computers and data storage. The Lexical Approach's usage of the most frequent words, its co-teaching of grammar with texts and

the production of lexical phrases, or chunks, are propositions that were introduced before by other authors.

All these ideas or developments presented in past methods have influenced, in some way, the creation of *my preferred teaching approach*. To understand how this happened, it is important to compare these developments. As seen before, the most noteworthy change in the history of ESL teaching was the change of its focus from a reading and writing perspective to a listening and speaking one. This has generated a lot of debate in the field of ESL and to contemplate this change in focus, *my preferred teaching approach* intends to present material that would use all the stimuli at the same time. It is important to note that some of these developments or ideas may have had a new and modern idea behind it, but sometimes the old and simple idea was just as good as the modern and new.

The first level to be analyzed in the discussion part has to be the *approach*, since it comprises the theory of the *nature of language and the theory of the nature of language learning*. It is important to acknowledge that many of the authors analyzed in this thesis were not overly concerned about the development of a significant theory towards the nature of language. Some, for instance, focused their attention on the nature of verbs and how verbs are the soul of a construction. Others paid close attention to how children use contextual and situational cues to interpret utterances while some others proclaimed that speech, instead of the written word, was the main form of language. As described in the second chapter of this thesis, many of the methods started to be described as structuralist, interactionalist, and functionalist, a matter that will be addressed later in a table at the end of this chapter. The Classical Method, the Grammar-Translation Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, and the Lexical Approach are examples of methods that have a structural view towards the nature of language. The Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, and the Natural Approach are examples of methods that have an interactional view. *My preferred teaching approach* has a functional view of the nature of language and following its focus on verbalization.

The *nature of language learning* deals with the cognitive process of language learning and the conditions that allow for the success of these processes. For many years, it was believed that the L2 should be taught the same as the L1. Kroeh argued against this idea when he stated that the same conditions for learning the L1 would never occur again, making the learning of the L2 an entirely different thing. Richards and Rodgers contemplated the parameters of habit formation, initiation, deduction, and physical environment for L2 learning. In habit formation, initiation, and deduction, they addressed how textbook writers should produce natural texts that are simple enough to

be comprehensible for the elementary student. To learn a language, it is necessary to have a comprehensive initiation, and to have that language developed, it is necessary to deduct and create the habit of reading and learning new words. The physical environment should not be seen as just the idea of teachers using audio or video apparatus, but as the idea of how the classroom is viewed by teachers and students. Methods, such as Communicative Language Teaching, hold a condition-oriented theory, which accounts for the environment in which language learning occurs. Other methods, such as Grammar-Translation, hold a process-oriented theory, which addresses habit-formation, initiation, and deduction. In *my preferred teaching approach*, learning an L2 is treated differently than learning an L1 and it holds the habit formation aspect as intrinsic to vocabulary building. Strengthening the habit of book reading in the classroom is the end objective of *my preferred teaching approach*. It initiates the process of reading a book with previously presented constructions with the books' most frequent words without context. After the constructions and words are learned by the students, the book is presented and read aloud by the teacher, in its entirety if possible, in one lecture. This process is the heart of *my preferred teaching approach's* syllabus.

These examples of physical environment, habit formation, deduction, and initiation were particularly important for the development of *my preferred teaching approach*, but it is necessary to consider the nitty-gritty of a method. These lay in the levels of *design* and *procedure*. As presented before, many of the developments in ESL teaching, remain in the cluster of *procedure*. To avoid any sort of prejudice upon their development, it is important to keep in mind that every single one of these developments had a person behind it who was willing to sacrifice time and commit themselves to making, in their view, the teaching of ESL more efficient. All of these developments should then be considered valid, even if later on they were dismissed by other authors. It is also important to note that some of these developments may not have worked within the method that they were presented in, but by combining them within another method with different characteristics, may bring these developments back to light. A good example and precedent is how Krashen and Terrell brought back some developments made by the Direct Method.

The *designs* mentioned before in this thesis, about teacher and student roles, material, etc., have in some way assisted me on forging *my preferred teaching approach*. The heart of the level of *design* is the *syllabus*. *Marcel* distinguished between the four qualities of learning a language: reading, writing, hearing, and speaking. He was one of the first who experimented with a detailed psychological theory of child language acquisition. He focuses on the written word before the speaking ability can rise. These

aspects are the base of a syllabus. When addressing a syllabus, it is important to point out what *Swan* stated about some of the syllabuses used around the world, namely that “language courses had much the same shape [...] from beginner’s to advanced” (*Swan*, 1985, p. 80). He continued his critique over some methods and makes a very valid point when addressing the responsibility of failure when a student does not learn the L2. “Defective language learning is often attributed to defective syllabus design: the student does not learn the language properly because we do not teach the right things, or because we organize what we teach in the wrong way.” (*Swan*, 1985, p. 77). *Sweet* gave some remarkable insights into the syllabus. He addressed the coherency in text with the importance of natural texts, the inductive teaching of grammar, vocabulary building based on everyday language, and objects and he presented several words necessary for the acquisition of an L2. *Berlitz* saw the syllabus as a closed system where the teacher had to follow strict rules and had no freedom to create. He followed strict the principles of the Direct Method. An interesting take on how the syllabus should be organized came from the *Coleman Report*, which introduced the idea that vocabulary building should be done in a soft way, without the use of lists and with few grammar explanations. The analyses of these syllabuses have shown that it can be hard to mix vocabulary building and grammar, and that in its early stages, it is good to present students with different word combinations from those that they already know. The syllabuses analyzed in this thesis showed remarkable differences between each other. *My preferred teaching approach* holds *Blackie’s* description of *Clenard’s* classroom practices as an example of what a good syllabus can do for L2 teaching. In his strategies, he used objects, described them aloud, pronounced their names, and asked the students to repeat them. The blackboard was used to write down the new words and to study their variations. He later introduced writing and prolonged listening exercises with short classes that presented things that could be explained easily in simple constructions. Grammar came much later, as well as a reading program. Another good example is the lexical syllabus. It presented the idea that by combining the most frequent words of something (i.e. a text, a book, the English language, etc.) and analyzing their potential to language teaching could be of great benefit. In *my preferred teaching approach*, great attention was given to the elaboration of the syllabus. It is set in a strict way, where any teacher, independent of their level of English, can teach. It incorporates the idea of easy vocabulary building and inductive teaching of grammar. The students have an active presence throughout, even if it is a teacher-student approach.

According to *Richards and Rodgers* it is in design that *educational materials* are contemplated. When analyzing a material, one needs to consider two main things. The

first would be at what level the students need to be by the end of a specific time frame. The second would be the coherence in which the educational material is built. After considering these two main issues, other minor issues should become the concern, such as: corrected pronunciation, the length of the material for a day's lecture, the analysis of grammatical rules, the usage of a dictionary, the usage of L1, the use of connected text as opposed to disconnected constructions, drawings, pictures, the focus on the verb, etc. Five authors addressed some other 'minor' issues'. *Miège*, in his books, established an L2-teaching program focused on pronunciation, spelling, grammar, dialogues, and phrases, all taught at the same time. *Bellot's* second book brings phonetic transcription to its highest level and it serves as a good example of how important phonetics was in those days, something vastly different from the apparatus that teachers have available nowadays, where we can just search for the pronunciation. He also presented the idea of a printed version of the material in front of the students. *Prendergast* observed the fact that children learn with the help of chunks and he tried to include this knowledge into language teaching by studying the most frequent constructions. He advocated that students should be taught the most basic structural patterns occurring in the language and then would be provided with the assets for creating hundreds more constructions on the same models. *Ascham* gave L1 and L2 the same status and presented the L2 with literature to the students. *Jacotot* instructed students to research the rest of the book for more examples of the words they just read, thereby introducing them to the concept of frequency. *My preferred teaching approach* intends to cover one schoolyear and to bring children's books to the classroom. To achieve a good level of English during this first year, and to strengthen the habit of reading books in the students, a coherent syllabus is to be created. The five authors mentioned above in this paragraph bring a coherent line of ideas for the types of exercises present in *my preferred teaching approach*. *Ascham's* usage of L2 literature combined with *Jacotot's* most frequent words in the L2 books, followed by *Prendergast's* usage of chunks and frequent construction inspired the creation of constructions using the most frequent words in children's books. These constructions, based on *Miège* and *Bellot's* observations, would teach speaking, writing, reading, translation, listening, and coloring in the same exercise. After teaching all the words contained in the children's book in disconnected constructions, the book itself would be presented and read to the students.

The concept of text rests in the *design*. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the constructions (built from the most frequent words) used in *my preferred teaching approach* would come from L2 children's books. Choosing a book or a text has been a central issue in ESL teaching. Some authors argued that dialogues were particularly

interesting at the beginning of the study. Others thought that they should start with a descriptive text, move to narratives, and then dialogues. *Florio*, for instance, suggested texts that cover situations. *My preferred teaching approach* would begin with short books that do not require too many disconnected constructions for the students' to get to read it. It would avoid dialogues at first, focusing more on narratives. As the students' progress in their vocabulary building (learning with the disconnected constructions), the book's difficulty should progress as well, introducing then situational texts, and as *Florio* suggested, coming to a future point where the students could start reading the books, articles or texts used in English speaking countries.

The second major concern addressed in the methods presented earlier was the *role of the teacher*. The ideas regarding the teacher's role in the classroom rely first on the interactional pattern that the method wants to focus on. *Comenius*, for instance, believed in a teacher-centered system. *Jacotot*, on the other hand, believed in a student-centered method. Once having the idea of which interactional pattern a method wants to apply, the teacher's role becomes clearer. In a student-student method, the teacher is seen more as an observer who encourages students to talk about their personal experiences and who creates engaging activities. Teachers also have to respond to the students, not direct or control them. In a teacher-student interactional pattern, the teacher would traditionally ask questions, use pictures and maps, concentrate on correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm and even intonation, introduce topics and tasks, obtain grammatical examples of the texts and even help students to deduce the meaning of new words, and avoid the extensive grammatical explanations. The following authors, as well as the ideas before, have influenced *my preferred teaching approach*. *Holyband* argued for repeatedly reading the constructions out loud to the students. *Franke* believed that teachers should replace books, especially in the initial stages. *Priestley*, 250 years ago, suggested that the teacher should ask repetitive questions for every construction. *Jacotot* follows to the idea that explanations are not only unnecessary but even wrong. *Sauveur* addressed the roles of teachers by stating that they should make use of gestures, mimicry, and translation. He believed that teachers should have the complete freedom to use any means necessary to convey the meaning of new words. *My preferred teaching approach* follows the concept of teacher-student. It sees the teacher as the guardian of knowledge that has to be transmitted to the students. The educational material does take the creative freedom away from the teacher, but it does not dictate what the teacher can or cannot do in the classroom. It sees the teacher as someone who has to perform certain tasks in any way they see fit. These tasks are: choosing the books before the schoolyear starts, preparing the constructions, pictures or drawings, reading

the constructions aloud, asking the students to repeat them, showing the students how to write on top of the 'dotted' verb, asking the students verification questions, helping the students translate the words, and reading the books aloud in the classroom.

Once the idea of how the text should be taught by teachers and how important a coherent and objective educational material is, the issue of *vocabulary building* should be addressed. Past authors believed that basic literacy and everyday conversation were designed to introduce useful vocabulary. They also thought that collecting and putting all words of a text in the index was a good idea. *Plötz* believed in the usage of easy and short constructions, as did *Pestalozzi*. *Gouin* saw the verb as the heart of the construction, and at the same time the hardest to overcome and to memorize. These three authors did inspire some of the features of vocabulary building in *my preferred teaching approach*, but *Comenius'* ideas are central. He linked pictures to constructions to help create a memory and also to draw or color it in order to link it (later) to the language. Furthermore, he thought that handwriting practice based on child constructions would help the students to focus only on the most important words to get ready. Like *Comenius*, drawings or pictures were also used in *my preferred teaching approach*. Handwriting is presented, and the focus on the verb as well as the usage of short constructions is central. All these characteristics help students create a memory around the word that they are learning.

A closer look at the use of *translation* in ESL teaching is also necessary. Some authors handled translation by using L1 and L2 texts side by side, while others used the L1 constructions and L2 constructions on top of each other. *Caxton* was the first to do a direct translation, while his assistant *de Worde* fifteen years later put L1 and L2 in interchanging lines. The idea is that a construction on top of the other creates a system that makes it easier for the students to familiarize themselves with the translation. *Hamilton* also supported the idea of having the translations in interchanging lines. Authors also discussed how known words from the L2 should be used to teach new words, eliminating the need for translation, and some other authors went as far as to not allow the use of translation under any circumstance. *Ascham* treated the L2 and L1 with the same status. This idea is held with great value because it helps students understand language structure by easily comparing L1 and L2. Playing a central part in language teaching, translation is considered by some authors to help students understand the influence of one language on the other, and that it could make students come to grips with the L2. In *my preferred teaching approach*, the ideas of *de Worde* and *Hamilton* are clearly present. The words are translated together in the construction, but if the construction does not present a clear translation, a word-by-word is to be performed.

Ascham's insight on treating the L2 as the L1 is presented in the approach when it asks for the translation (focusing on the verb) and when it allows the students to use the L1 to ask questions and to compare to the L2.

Another topic on ESL teaching that many authors addressed is how to present *grammar* to the students. Some authors saw that the grammatical characteristics of the English language were not shared by many other languages. *Holyband* did not teach grammar directly and gave the opinion that grammar belongs in more advanced classes. *Mason* was the first to teach the continuous and the progressive, making a breakthrough for English grammar teaching from its origins in Latin grammar teaching. *Webbe's* early usage of communication skills would eventually lead to the understanding of grammar through usage, similar to *my preferred teaching approach*. According to some methods, teachers should create a unique construction to highlight some grammatical points or show how individual words can change the meaning of a construction. They, the authors, also mentioned covering grammar in a gradual introduction of its structures by the usage of simple reading texts. *My preferred teaching approach* believes that grammar, if needed to be taught, is a matter for much later, around the fourth or fifth year of contact with English as an L2. In case the students explicitly ask for a grammatical rule, the teacher is free to answer and if it is possible, the teacher should make a parallel between the L1 grammar and the L2 grammar.

When addressing the *role of the student* in the classroom, we have several developments that have been addressed by previous authors. Some of them said that an intensive oral interaction in the L2 was of great benefit for L2 students, while others believed that students should focus on correct pronunciation. *Jacotot* states that a student-centered method is a way of letting the students understand language by themselves. He, for instance, instructed students to research the rest of the book for more examples of the words they just read, thereby introducing them to the concept of frequency. *Miller* introduced in his book a handwriting practice, something which is believed to help the memorization process of new words. *Gaillard* used constructions with missing links in order to help students to memorize new words. *Viëtor* presented the usage of questions and answers in the L2. Other authors state that personal experiences in the classroom environment were also dealt with, such as the interesting but not noticeably clear task that students should be able to explain why they had made the mistakes and thus try to not repeat it. Reading texts and books aloud was also, as well as meeting students in small groups and encouraging them to speak the L2, always making it clear that they should not be afraid to make mistakes. Finally, some authors have directed students not to feel that they are obliged to respond in L2 immediately,

and that they should do so when they feel safe. *My preferred teaching approach* makes a clear cut on the role of the student, one in the classroom, and the other outside the classroom. It suggests, from the beginning, that the students have an active presence in classroom exercises and outside the classroom, it encourages them to start reading as much as possible. As to their participation in the classroom, they are asked to write over the 'dotted' printed verbs, to repeat the constructions aloud, and to answer in the L2 and L1.

A more peculiar issue that some methods addressed was how important the presence of *phonetics* in the educational materials was. Classes were designed exclusively for the teaching of phonetic instruction, having even semi-phonetic transcription of the texts next to it. *Bellot* used it believing that instruction in phonetics would entitle teachers to articulate the language correctly. Phonetics and its feasible application in teaching pronunciation through the use of transcription, stressing the concept of starting with the spoken language, were of major importance. But today, the role of phonetics in the classroom has been transformed. The need to pronounce the words correctly continues but with a simple internet search it is possible to obtain the pronunciation of most of the words in the English language, making the use of phonetic transcription unnecessary. In *my preferred teaching approach*, the phonetics and the IPA are not taught. The students follow the pronunciation of the teacher as he or she is free to search online for the pronunciation.

All of the ideas addressed before, and which have influenced *my preferred teaching approach* are only valid if they are feasible in the classroom environment. This feasibility falls in the category of *procedure*. The advancements of technology have made things vastly different in the classroom but some ideas, such as reading and repeating texts of all forms aloud and asking students to do the same, or using texts to grade students on a day-to-day basis, and even bringing real objects to the classroom to try to entice the students' curiosity and memory, can still be applied in today's classrooms. The differences brought on by technology allow teachers to be better prepared for lectures. Today, every lecture can become a presentation, assuming that the teacher takes the time to do so, and that the material used allows the teacher to do so. Classes that usually last 45-50 minutes can be divided into a presentation, discussion, exercises, group work, and many other ways, depending only on the teacher's evaluation of each classroom. In *my preferred teaching approach*, the role of the teacher, as in many methods and approaches suggested, is a conglomerate of all these ideas. A teacher should, from time to time, observe their students, teach grammar, help with pronunciation, use the L1 when necessary, try to spur all the stimuli of the students at the same time, be a story teller,

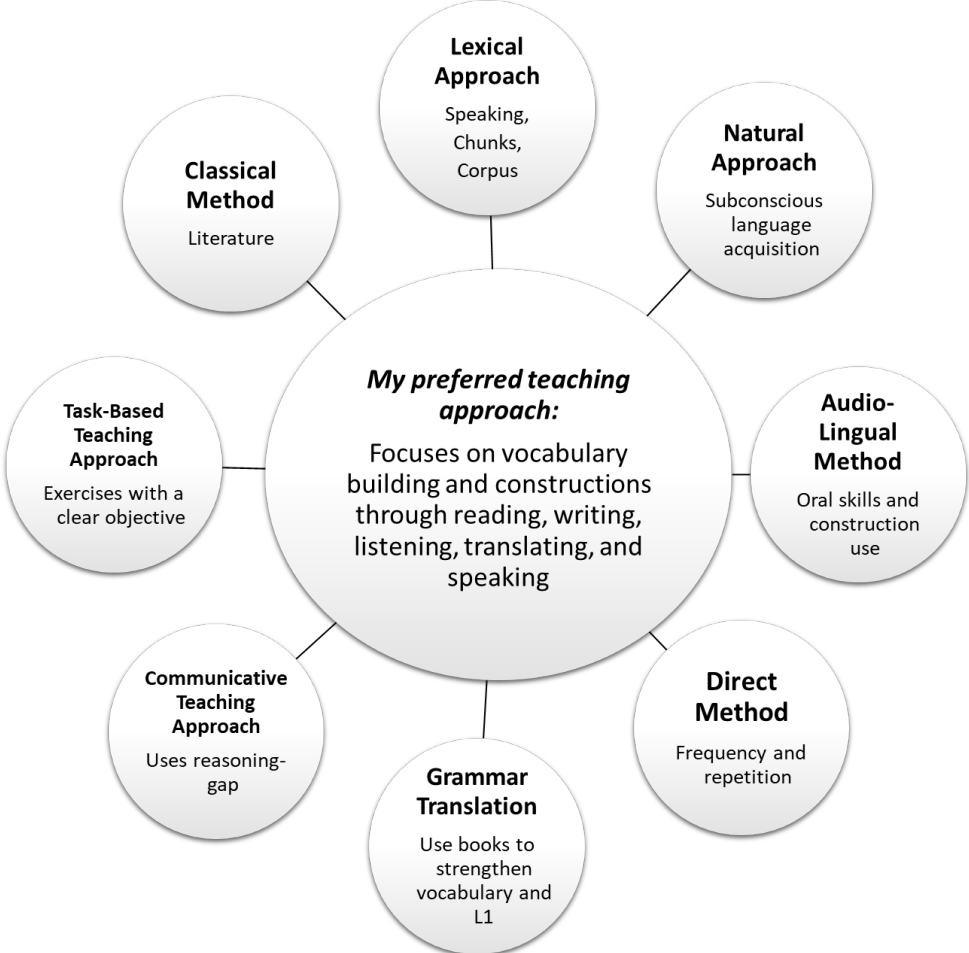
be a good listener, have patience, evaluate how students are receiving the new information, and many other attributes, that altogether make a good teacher. The success of any idea on the level of procedure will always depend on the perception that the teacher has for each of their classrooms.

Another matter to consider in this discussion are the *results and research goals* of *my preferred teaching approach* in context. The analysis of the developments in ESL teaching had culminated in the proposed approach. A test was then made and performed in order to prove the efficiency of the approach. Some aspects such as teacher's performance during the test and lectures, the students' reactions, and the daily developments of its implementation were not taken into consideration. The pre-and post-test around *my preferred teaching approach* do not show clear results and therefore cannot prove its efficiency. The sample size is too small and there are many aspects to be improved. As opposed to other established approaches, *my preferred teaching approach* is still in the beginning stages. Therefore, a valid statement about the overall efficiency of *my preferred teaching approach* is not yet possible. This is a topic for further investigations.

Klinghardt's work is a good example of how to perform a long-term test of a method. He took the parameters that were addressed by *Sweet* and implemented them in a long-term experiment with English beginners, something necessary for validation or exclusion. Parallels can be found, from his testing to some of the aspects of *my preferred teaching approach*, since he made his students listen carefully to the pronunciation by reading aloud the constructions and repeating them. His students wrote the constructions down and an interlinear translation helped them to understand. Every method presented before has been implemented in classrooms, has been peer-reviewed from a multitude of angles and has had time to develop. Therefore, all their pitfalls are well known. *My preferred teaching approach* was only tested in a small group which does not allow a statistically significant statement.

My preferred teaching approach presents many issues to be discussed. For example, it leaves out advanced ESL students, students who want to learn on their own, and students who transfer from other schools during the schoolyear. In the educational material the grammatical rules, communicative skills, groupings, pair-work, the use of realia, real-life conversations, and the usage of video are some aspects that are left out. It can be discussed why *my preferred teaching approach* leaves out communication skills from its educational material. It breaks a 'tradition' that started on the late nineteenth century and continues until today. It takes a step back and advocates the reestablishing of nineteenth century traditions that focused on reading. Addressing some of the

concerns that distinguish a method is also important. *My preferred teaching approach* has a functional view when it comes to the nature of language. It sees frequency and context as key elements, when analyzing the nature of language learning. Its syllabus is short, and it does not provide any long-term goals. Its teacher's roles are very time consuming for the teacher, and for it to work it is necessary to have a very motivated ESL teacher. The interactional pattern is not student-centered, as many modern methods are, and the tactics or strategies used during the performance of the method in the classroom are still to be developed. While the Classical and Grammar Translation Methods promote the use of books as a mode of language acquisition, heavy emphasis on translation, memorization, and grammar rules remove motivation and immersion from the classroom. While the Direct Method overemphasizes the L2, and the Natural Approach lacks structure, both motivate subconscious language acquisition through participation. The behavioristic aspects of the Audio-Lingual Method only highlight right and wrong, yet the use of constructions is an integral part of *my preferred teaching approach*. Moreover, the incomplete Lexical Approach uses corpora as a foundation, which is key to developing a method that encourages a thorough analysis of frequency in language teaching.



The future improvements of this research lie in fixing the mistakes that occurred during the test, and in the material handed to the students. Another improvement would be the development of a full schoolyear's educational material, based on corpora from specific children's books. As Sinclair and Renouf mentioned in their draft paper *A lexical syllabus for language learning*, there is great importance in the number of words a student of an L2 knows. This is an important aspect to be addressed in the future. A longer period of testing and a larger number of students (fourteen students are an exceedingly small testing group) would allow greater representation and generalization of the efficiency of the approach, resulting in more data for analysis of distribution and results. In statistical terms, the larger the sample size, the better the evaluation, and this is a factor to be considered in the future of this research.

To display the main attributes of each method and approach presented, a table with its most important characteristics for the creation of a method (according to Richards and Rodgers, 1984) follows. As can be seen, *my preferred teaching approach* tries to combine some of the characteristics from the previous methods or approaches.

	Classical Method	Grammar-Translation Method	Direct Method	Audio-Lingual Method	Communicative Language Teaching Method	Task-Based Language Teaching Method	Natural Approach	Lexical Approach	My Preferred Teaching Approach
Theory of the nature of language	structural view	structural view	interactional view	structural view	interactional view	interactional view	interactional view	structural view	functional view
Theory of the nature of language learning	process-oriented	process-oriented	condition-oriented	condition-oriented	condition-oriented	condition-oriented	Krashen's five Hypothesis	process-oriented	frequency within context
General and specific objectives of the method	study of grammar and literature	study of grammar	oral proficiency	oral proficiency	oral proficiency	oral proficiency	communicative skills	to teach chunks	books
Types of learning and teaching activities	reading activities	translating constructions	L2 daily vocabulary	oral drilling	speaking	speaking	listening, and some speaking in the beginning	production of chunks	speaking, writing, reading, translating, listening, coloring
Learner roles	to learn texts and translations by heart	translating constructions, grammar exercises	correct pronunciation, question-answer-concept, daily routine speaking.	students copy the teacher, focus on correct speaking, grammar and pronunciation	students are to orally deal with real life situations, recreated in the classroom	exercises or tasks that have a clear objective	different degrees of participation, monosyllabic answers in the beginning, silent period, more complex interactions about the students own experiences	students need to notice frequent chunks	speaking, writing, reading, translating, listening, coloring
Teachers roles	teachers asked pre-prepared questions (usually about grammar) which students had to know the answer by heart	sits around asking questions that the students already know the answer for it	vocabulary through pictures, objects and gestures, no translation, only L2	guide the students in repeating what the teacher said	teacher walks around, giving groups of students role-play, interviews, etc, exercises to develop their L2 speaking skills	create or re-create real situations in the classroom	created and emphasized interest in daily situations where communication rather than form is key	emphasizes chunks that appear in text or dialogues	speaking, repeating the same construction, question the verb, usage of L1 and L2
The roles of instructional materials	exercises that promoted translation	separates the rules of grammar from the text, helping student to memorize it	everyday vocabulary and constructions, grammar is inductively taught	oral drilling, based on repetition, seen a word in a different construction, and reshaping a construction	role-play, interviews, group work, to provide students with real life situations, information gap, opinion sharing	exercises such as information-gap, reasoning-gap and opinion-gap, all focused on oral exchange	activities that promote subconscious language acquisition	based on lexical syllabus, number of L2 words known, lists of chunks, barely uses grammar	short constructions, with most frequent words from a book or text, pictures, drawings, translation, focus on the verb, coloring.
Classroom techniques, practices and behaviors	Students had to put tremendous effort on memorization	L1 use abundantly, grammar explanation in the L1, immense usage of texts with emphasis on the grammar previous explained, practice writing after, constructions translated to L2, vocabulary list, accurate use of language	only L2, everyday vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing, vocabulary building from objects and pictures, abstract vocabulary by association of ideas, precise pronunciation and grammar, students participate a lot	L2 with a bit of L1, mechanical habit-formation, immediate reinforcement to correct answers, oral repetition and memorization, inductive grammar, use of tapes, visual aids, labs, reading and writing based on previous oral work	usage of L2 text designed to language teaching, students talk about personal experiences in the L2 with each other	classroom activity that involves a student to understand and produce the target language while focusing on conveying the meaning and not being too concerned with form	understanding messages in L2, no importance on error correction, drilling or conscious learning of grammar rules, learning of vocabulary base on grammatical structures	focuses on fixed expressions that occur frequently in dialogues, teaching of chunks and set phrases	focus on speaking, listening, reading, writing and translating all within the same exercise, focus on immediate construction first, later book
Times, space and equipments used by the teacher	classroom, classical books and notebooks	classroom, classical books and notebooks	classroom, realia, gestures	classroom, or audio lab	classroom, recreated real life situations	classroom	classroom	classroom	classroom, digital board or projector, color pencils, gestures
Interactional patterns	teacher - students	teacher - students	teacher - students	teacher - students	student - student	student - student	student - student	teacher - students	teacher - students
Tactics and strategies used by teachers and learners	have the students translate from classical Greek and Latin	have students translate from L2 texts to the L1, attention to form not to content	use spoken language in situations with no native-language translation, question and answer, reading out loud, dictation	conduct oral/aural drills and pattern practice	use information gaps, role play, games	engage students in learning other subject matter, tasks, or in problem-solving around issues in their lives	delay speaking until students are ready, make meaning clear through actions and visual, stimulate content, games, problem solving	provides the knowledge of chunks, observation, focus on memorizing words, and vocabulary building	provides short constructions, acquired from book's most frequent words, later presents the books and tries to create a habit of reading

6 Conclusion

This research study investigated ways to reform established ESL teaching methods for children in primary school. In order to create *my preferred teaching approach*, it was necessary to learn and consider what previous methods have achieved and what their limits are. The knowledge acquired with this analysis and the creation of *my preferred teaching approach* led to a test that was set up and performed with Brazilian students from the first grade in primary school. The test itself did not show clear results. Further work is necessary to establish *my preferred teaching approach* as a valid method for ESL teaching in the classroom.

Today, access to education, along with previous success cases such as Berlitz, provide a framework in which educators can develop their own teaching methods. At the same time, pedagogical coordinators and bureaucrats adhere to traditional teaching methods that overcomplicate ESL teaching. Considering the evolution of language teaching methods, *my preferred teaching approach* seeks to be a proposal of improved efficiency within the field of ESL teaching. Acknowledging that there is variation in method and environment, this approach has limitations.

With these central ideas in mind, I conclude that the main goal of *my preferred teaching approach* is to strengthen the habit of reading books in English and to help students develop a more independent disposition toward vocabulary building. Future research on this topic should highlight reading comprehension in the L2 classroom. Therefore, a school year should be dedicated to immersing students in L1 curriculum, and this project continues with the development of a syllabus. Furthermore, these hypotheses can be addressed in an extended test with larger sample sizes. Moreover, the efficiency of this proposed method can be assessed based on the results.

My preferred teaching approach rose from the analysis of the many methods that were presented in this thesis. It took a step back and tried to implement the reading and writing aspects that modern approaches have put aside. It combined exercises that stimulate reading, listening, speaking, writing, visual stimuli and translation at the same time. The distinction of what a *method*, *an approach*, *a design*, and *a procedure* were detailed, and all the characteristics described by Richards and Rodgers on what constitutes a *method* were addressed. *My preferred teaching approach* presents an option that fulfills all the requirements that constitute a method. It has been here described and tested; therefore, it can theoretically be considered a *method*.

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<http://www.drawcentral.com/2013/08/drawing-hands.html>

Image of the strong woman, last accessed 08.05.2018:

https://www.google.de/search?biw=1517&bih=777&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=PWDwWtHsHMyrU6O0qZAG&q=drawing+woman&oq=drawing+woman&gs_l=img.3..0i10.83836.85289.0.85690.13.8.0.0.0.98.590.8.8.0....0...1c.1.64.img..8.3.239...0i8i7i30k1j0i7i30k1.0.qhLcxNVk Ygw#imgrc=sAS8dFHxO0Jn5M:

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<http://getdrawings.com/get-drawing#father-and-son-drawing-12.gif>

Image of a glass of water, last accessed 07.09.2020:

<http://slimber.com/gallery/image/water-glass:g414176.html>

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<https://www.shutterstock.com/de/image-vector/simple-black-white-little-boy-standing-334737950>

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<https://clipartstation.com/thumbs-up-clipart-black-and-white-letters-regarding-thumbs-up-clipart-black-and-white/>

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<https://paintingvalley.com/bottle-line-drawing#bottle-line-drawing-5.jpg>

Image of three kids, last accessed 08.05.2018:

<https://www.canstockphoto.com/hand-drawn-children-walk-on-the-lawn-in-66574024.html>

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<https://de.dreamstime.com/stock-abbildung-beste-freunde-image53460738>

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<http://www.getcoloringpages.com/cow-coloring-pages>

Image of supermarket, last accessed 07.09.2020:

<https://www.dreamstime.com/grocery-store-shop-interior-black-white-graphic-sketch-illustration-vector-image107382334>

Image of a door open, last accessed 07.09.2020:

<http://clipart-library.com/clipart/810605.htm>

Image of a ball, last accessed 07.09.2020:

<https://flyclipart.com/handball-ball-clip-art-free-vector-sports-balls-clipart-347636>

Image of a little girl, last accessed 07.09.2020:

<https://pngio.com/PNG/a19054-little-girl-png-drawing-black-and-white.html>

Image of a pencil, last accessed 07.09.2020:

http://www.clipartpanda.com/clipart_images/pencil-coloring-pages-images-39012534

Image of a little girl with flowers, last accessed 07.09.2020:

https://www.pngkit.com/view/u2q8q8y3y3i1o0q8_designer-drawing-little-girl-boy-and-girl-holding/

Image with a man with a big hand, last accessed 08.05.2018

<https://www.istockphoto.com/de/vektor/comic-mann-mit-einem-gro%C3%9Fen-hand-geste-gm467030915-26197949>

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<https://www.pinterest.de/pin/486107353512916600/>

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stick_figure#/media/File:Stick_Figure.svg

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<https://pixabay.com/de/illustrations/baum-silhouetten-schatten-weide-4939904/>

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<http://drawingandcrafts.com/realistic-ant-coloring-pages.html>

Image with a stick figure with a big head, last accessed 08.05.2018:

<https://de.depositphotos.com/4535367/stock-illustration-drawing-cartoon-man-with-a.html>

Image of a dog, last accessed 07.09.2020:

<https://cz.pinterest.com/pin/504121752041517349/>

Image of a mouse with big eyes, last accessed 07.09.2020:

<http://clipart-library.com/clipart/qiBAn66jT.htm>

Image of the moon and stars, last accessed 07.09.2020:

<http://clipart-library.com/clipart/pcqraoLni.htm>

8 Appendix

Search query: "V" restricted to "Medium of Text: Book and Perceived level of difficulty: Low and Age of Audience: Child" returned 119474 hits in 26 different texts (517,990 words [26 texts]); Frequency: 230649.24 instances per million words

No	Filename	Hits 1 to 50	Page 1 / 2390
1	ABX.1	n't know about — yet,' he said gently. Philip	stared
2	ABX.1	— yet,' he said gently. Philip stared, hardly	believing
3	ABX.1	' he said gently. Philip stared, hardly believing what he	saw
4	ABX.2	gently. Philip stared, hardly believing what he saw. It	was
5	ABX.3	what he saw. It was the shock of it. He	'd
6	ABX.3	saw. It was the shock of it. He'd never	seen
7	ABX.3	'd never seen anyone in Jubilee Wood in all the months he	'd
8	ABX.3	never seen anyone in Jubilee Wood in all the months he'd	been
9	ABX.3	seen anyone in Jubilee Wood in all the months he'd been	coming
10	ABX.4	months he'd been coming up here. And now, here	was
11	ABX.4	been coming up here. And now, here was this boy	standing
12	ABX.4	standing by the big pool, as cool as a cucumber and	wearing
13	ABX.5	as cool as a cucumber and wearing his helmet. The boy	looked
14	ABX.5	The boy looked round behind him up at the cliff. Philip	stepped
15	ABX.7	stepped back quickly into the cover of the trees. The boy	was
16	ABX.7	back quickly into the cover of the trees. The boy was	stooping
17	ABX.7	the cover of the trees. The boy was stooping now,	searching
18	ABX.8	stooping now, searching for something on the bank. The helmet	had
19	ABX.8	now, searching for something on the bank. The helmet had	tipped
20	ABX.8	on the bank. The helmet had tipped forward and the boy	rushed
21	ABX.9	tipped forward and the boy pushed it back. Like Philip he	wore
22	ABX.10	pushed it back. Like Philip he wore glasses. Then he	picked
23	ABX.10	rock from the shallow water at the edge of the pool and	threw
24	ABX.10	edge of the pool and threw it out into the middle,	making
25	ABX.10	middle, making a huge splash; the rings of the splash	spread

Screenshot 1:
BNC query,
most common
verbs in
context

Frequency breakdown of lexical items for position "node" (5705 types and 119474 tokens)

No.	Lexical items	No. of occurrences	Percent
1	was	8023	6.72%
2	said	3019	4.2%
3	had	3739	3.13%
4	a	3739	3.13%
5	Do	2749	2.3%
6	he	2734	1.95%
7	have	1996	1.67%
8	is	1887	1.58%
9	did	1843	1.54%
10	were	1818	1.52%
11	could	1391	1.13%
12	would	1132	1.2%
13	it	1233	1.03%
14	are	1130	0.95%
15	d	1102	0.92%
16	see	1094	0.92%
17	know	1070	0.85%
18	been	1007	0.84%
19	get	1004	0.84%
20	so	989	0.83%
21	eat	988	0.83%
22	can	902	0.75%
23	looked	899	0.75%

Screenshot 2:
verb BNC
query

Frequency breakdown of lexical items for position "node" (10350 types and 104302 tokens)

No.	Lexical items	No. of occurrences	Percent
1	time	871	0.84%
2	Miss	845	0.81%
3	Philip	842	0.81%
4	Lee	825	0.79%
5	Mr	743	0.71%
6	Mr	726	0.7%
7	may	662	0.63%
8	people	655	0.63%
9	even	591	0.57%
10	head	586	0.56%
11	Willie	575	0.55%
12	Carrie	572	0.55%
13	door	564	0.54%
14	Dot	560	0.54%
15	face	538	0.52%
16	has	509	0.49%
17	day	504	0.48%
18	House	474	0.45%
19	lots	440	0.42%
20	things	437	0.42%
21	school	436	0.42%
22	man	418	0.4%
23	room	411	0.39%

Screenshot 3:
noun BNC
query

Seguro | https://corpora.linguistik.uni-erlangen.de/bncweb/cgi-bin/sort_freq_list.pl?numOfSolutions=27855&theID=student4_1525700989&thin=0&kind=sort&sorttype=...

Frequency breakdown of lexical items for position "node" (4008 types and 27858 tokens)

Frequency breakdown of tags only | Get | Download whole table

No.	Lexical items	No. of occurrences	Percent
1	good	538	2%
2	old	511	1.98%
3	little	506	1.82%
4	other	426	1.53%
5	large	321	1.15%
6	small	311	1.12%
7	great	292	1.05%
8	color	282	1.01%
9	big	271	0.97%
10	white	270	0.97%
11	sure	226	0.81%
12	black	215	0.77%
13	new	200	0.72%
14	have	190	0.68%
15	young	189	0.68%
16	nice	174	0.62%
17	dark	170	0.61%
18	whole	169	0.61%
19	many	166	0.6%
20	open	161	0.58%
21	bad	159	0.57%
22	red	157	0.56%
23	some	155	0.56%

Screenshot 4:
adjectives
BNC query

Exercises number 1-15 from pre- and post-test:



D1

1) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) The girl was in school.
- (b) He said a black table not a white table.
- (c) I had a large and nice house.



D1

2) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) They have big long eyes.
- (b) Miss Good is a young teacher.
- (c) I think I did a good thing.



D1

3) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) I know a small and dark room.
- (b) We are little people.
- (c) I see an old and strange door.



D1

4) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) The boy looked at the new man.
- (b) Things were great.
- (c) Mum will be there.



- 5) Choose the sentence according to the picture.
- (a) Dad would like a large sandwich.
 - (b) The poor baby can't draw.
 - (c) I go to school.

061



- 6) Choose the sentence according to the picture.
- (a) It is not a real dog.
 - (b) Can Mrs. Good be on time?
 - (c) Could you paint her face dark?

062



- 7) Choose the sentence according to the picture.
- (a) Mr. Johnson has been nice to the cat.
 - (b) They got bad things for their mother.
 - (c) I get a new voice.

071



- 8) Choose the sentence according to the picture.
- (a) They've been poor their whole lives.
 - (b) Mother, I'm wrong, sorry.
 - (c) You're different father.

081



- 9) Choose the sentence according to the picture.
- (a) It's a sunny day.
 - (b) She has a small hand.
 - (c) I am sure we can open the window.

091



- 10) Choose the sentence according to the picture.
- (a) The other boy had a red and green face.
 - (b) The whole juice is bad.
 - (c) The different jar with a bit of honey is open.

101



- 11) Choose the sentence according to the picture.
- (a) It is a cold night.
 - (b) It was dead.
 - (c) He thought it was real.

111



032

12) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) I do my homework every day.
- (b) I have the best hands.
- (c) Don't put the water on the table.



13) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) I am going that way.
- (b) She's a great woman.
- (c) Mr. Johnson is back.

033



034

14) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) My dad has a big head
- (b) It's better to be wrong
- (c) We went to the park.






035

15) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) I've got a glass full of water
- (b) I am sure this time the dog won't come back.
- (c) Comeback and open the white vase.

Construction 1 (with the example of drawing the verb and the according slide)









She was in school.

She **was** in school.

ELA **ESTAVA** NA ESCOLA

21.12.2018 29







She was in school.

She **was** in school.

ELA **ESTAVA** NA ESCOLA

19.02.2019 29



was = estava

Teacher (repetir 2x):

Como se fala **was** em português?

Como se fala **estava** em inglês?

21.12.2018 30

Construction 2-64 (day 2-7)






She was at the house.

She **was** at the house.

ELA **ESTAVA** NA ESCOLA

21.12.2018 31





He said, no.

He **said**, no.

ELE **DISSE**, NÃO

21.12.2018 33



He said good things.

He said good things.

ELE DISSE BOAS COISAS

21.12.2018

35



I had cold water.

I had cold water.

EU TINHA GELADA ÁGUA

19.02.2019

37



We had a red table.

We had a red table.

NÓS TINHAMOS UMA VERMELHA MESA

19.02.2019

39



Dad's beautiful.

Dad's beautiful.

PAPAI É LINDO

19.02.2019

41



Mum's great.

Mum's great.

MAMÃE É DEMAIS

19.02.2019

43



We do good things.

We do good things.

NÓS FAZEMOS BOAS COISAS

19.02.2019

45



I do different voices.

I do different voices.

EU FAÇO DIFERENTES VOZES

19.02.2019

47



They have to be small.

They have to be small.

ELAS TEM QUE SER PEQUENAS

19.02.2019

49



The shop will be open.

The shop will be open.

A LOJA VAI ESTAR ABERTA

19.02.2019

51



I have a red pencil.

I have a red pencil.

EU TENHO UM VERMELHO LÁPIS

19.07.2019

53



We have a green ball.

We have a green ball.

NÓS TEMOS UMA VERDE BOLA

19.02.2019

55



She is right.

She is right.

ELA ESTÁ CERTA

19.02.2019

57



The hand is big.

The hand is big.

A MÃO É GRANDE

19.02.2019

59



She did the best.

She did the best.

ELA FEZ O MELHOR

19.02.2019

62



He did a strange voice.

He did a strange voice.

ELA FEZ UMA ESTRANHA VOZ

19.02.2019

64



They were sorry.

They were sorry.

ELES ESTAVAM ARREPENDIDOS

19.02.2019 66



You were a good boy.

You were a good boy.

VOCÊ ERA UM BOM MENINO

19.02.2019 68



I could have a white ball.

I could have a white ball.

EU PODERIA TER UMA BRANCA BOLA

19.02.2019 70



We could have a black doll.

We could have a black doll.

NÓS PODERÍAMOS TER UMA PRETA BONECA

19.02.2019 72



I would open the door.

I would open the door.

EU PODERIA ABRIR A PORTA

19.02.2019 74



I would like the red hands.

I would like the red hands.

EU PODERIA GOSTAR DAS VERMELHAS MÃOS



We'll be cold.

We'll be cold.

NÓS VAMOS ESTAR FRIOS



She'll be a woman.

She'll be a woman.

ELA VAI SER UMA MULHER



The trees are green.

The trees are green.

AS ÁRVORES SÃO VERDES



They are poor.

They are poor.

ELES SÃO POBRES



I'd time.

I d time.

EU TINHA TEMPO

19.02.2019

88



They'd big heads.

They d big heads.

ELES TINHAM GRANDES CABEÇAS

19.02.2019

89



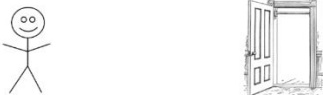
They see a dead ant.

They see a dead ant.

ELAS VEÊM UMA MORTA FORMIGA

19.02.2019

90



I see a strange door.

I see a strange door.

EU VEJO UMA ESTRANHA PORTA

19.02.2019

92



She knows my mom.

She knows my mom.

ELA CONHECE MINHA MÃE

19.02.2019

95



She knows the house.

She knows the house.

ELA CONHECE A CASA

19-02-2019

97



He has been to school.

He has been to school.

ELE TEM ESTADO NA ESCOLA

19-02-2019

99



She has been nice.

She has been nice.

ELA TEM ESTADO BEM

19-02-2019

101



I get water.

I get water.

EU PEGO ÁGUA

19-02-2019

103



We get a table.

We get a table.

NÓS TEMOS UMA MESA

19-02-2019

105



I'm a girl.

I m a girl.

EU SOU UMA MENINA

19.02.2019

128



I'm a boy.

I m a boy.

EU SOU UM MENINO

19.02.2019

130



We are little.

We are little.

NÓS SOMOS PEQUENOS

19.02.2019

132



You are new.

You are new.

VOCÊ É NOVO

19.02.2019

134



I thought you like honey.

I thought you like honey.

EU PENSEI VOCÊ GOSTA MEL

19.02.2019

136



We thought about dad.

We **thought** about dad.

NÓS PENSAMOS SOBRE PAPAI

138



They go home every day.

They **go** home every day.

ELAS VÃO CASA TODO DIA

137



We go to your room.

We **go** to your room.

NÓS VAMOS PRO SEU QUARTO

139



You got a dog.

You **got** a dog.

VOCÊ TEM UM CACHORRO

111



They got dark eyes.

They **got** dark eyes.

ELAS TEM ESCUROS OLHOS

113



I can go now.

I can go now.

EU POSSO IR AGORA

19.02.2019

115



We can go at night.

We can go at night.

NÓS PODEMOS IR A NOITE

19.02.2019

117



I looked at the window.

I looked at the window.

EU OLHEI PELA JANELA

19.02.2019

119



We looked at the woman.

We looked at the woman.

NÓS OLHAMOS PARA A MULHER

19.02.2019

121



We've a dog.

We've a dog.

NÓS TEMOS UM CACHORRO

19.02.2019

123



They've a table.

They've a table.

ELES TÊM UMA MESA

19.02.2019

125



We come in a sunny day.

We **come** in a sunny day.

NÓS VIEMOS EM UM ENSOLARADO DIA

19.02.2019

140



Mom comes home at night.

Mom **comes** home at night.

MAMÃE VEM CASA A NOITE

19.02.2019

142



I'm going to school.

I'm **going** to school.

EU ESTOU INDO PRA ESCOLA

19.02.2019

144



You're going back home.

You're **going** back home.

VOCÊ ESTÁ INDO VOLTA CASA

19.02.2019

146



They think about things.

They **think** about things.

ELES PENSAM SOBRE COISAS

19.02.2019

148



I think it's nice.

I think it's nice.

EU **PENSO** ISSO É BOM

19.02.2019

150



I went to a big room.

I went to a big room.

EU **FUI** PRA UM GRANDE QUARTO

19.02.2019

152



We went to a house.

We went to a house.

NÓS **FOMOS** PARA UMA CASA

19.02.2019

154



She came a bit late.

She came a bit late.

ELA **VEIO** UM POUCO TARDE

19.02.2019

156



You came first.

You came first.

VOCÊ **VEIO** PRIMEIRO

19.02.2019

158

Page 1 of the pre-test from a student (Daniel) as an example:

Name: Daniel
Date of the test: 28 / 08 / 2018
Date of birth: _____ / _____ / _____
School: Objetivo - Santo André



FAU Vocabulary Test Day 1



03

1) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) The girl was in school.
- (b) He said a black table not a white table.
- (c) I had a large and nice house.



04

2) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) They have big long eyes.
- (b) Miss Good is a young teacher.
- (c) I think I did a good thing.



05

3) Choose the sentence according to the picture.

- (a) I know a small and dark room.
- (b) We are little people.
- (c) I see an old and strange door.

Affidavit

I hereby truthfully declare that

- 1) I wrote the submitted paper independently and without illicit assistance;
- 2) I did not use any materials other than those listed in the bibliography and that all passages taken from these sources in full or in part have been marked as such and their origin has been cited individually in the text stating the version (edition and year of publication), the volume and page of the cited work, and in the case of Internet sources stating the complete URL and the date of access;
- 3) I have listed all institutions and persons that supported me in the preparation and production of the paper;
- 4) I have not submitted the paper to any other institution and that it has never been used for other purposes, neither in full nor in part.

I am aware that any violation of this declaration will result in a fail grade (*nicht bestanden*).

Erlangen, Signature