

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN EUROPE

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***Abstract:** This article considers an overview of the development in Foreign Language Teaching in Europe. Till the 16th century Latin was studied as a common foreign language, later other western languages such as English, French and Italian became popular and using the Latin language is decreased gradually and finally be a dead language. In the 18th century, utilizing the English language was increased day by day because of the economical development of the United States of America. It is common knowledge that economically strong country's language is usually learned by other nations to do partnership with that country. Consequently, now English is considered a global language and is taught as a main foreign language in different parts of the world.*

***Key words:** history of FLT, Foreign Language Teaching, lingua franca, western languages, language learning.*

Introduction. The history of foreign language teaching is traced back to the sixth century to Roman Empire. Romans were the first to begin learning a foreign language in the world. During the fifth century, there was bilingualism, two languages were utilized in the various parts of the Empire. From the sixth century in the west part of the Roman Empire, the Greek language was learned as a foreign language with the interpretation of Latin [5]. In Europe, before the sixteenth century, Latin was considered as a lingua franca, while during the XVI-XVII century the French language was taught as one. At

first, only aristocrats learned the French language, and people who can speak in French were considered privileged ones. Later not only representatives of the upper class but also soldiers, merchants, tourists were demanded to know this language to do their job. Even if at that time French was a popular foreign language, other languages such as English, Italian were taught as foreign languages in some countries.

Main part. Some scholars and experienced instructors had a great impact on foreign language teaching in history. As Howatt acclaimed in his book “History of Teaching English Language” the first one is Jacques Bellot, who taught English to French immigrants and native speakers of English as a mother tongue in London. Jacques Bellot wrote everyday conversations in his two small English manuals for French refugees in the 1580s. The first book is “The English Schoolmaster”, which was published in 1580, starts with the English alphabet and pronunciation [3]. In this book, Bellot wrote homophones in the difficult words section, by doing this author helped people who learn English with only listening and not know the written form of the words. At that time refugees learned foreign language orally in their workplaces when they spoke with native speakers. The second book is “Familiar Dialogues” (1586), which is a collection of ordinary conversations of everyday life, that is given in French and English language in two columns. Howatt acclaim that “Bellot’s English manuals are not as thorough or as enthusiastic pedagogically as most of the contemporary French textbooks. On the other hand, they take their task seriously and were no doubt of practical satisfaction to their customers.” [3]. It seems that Bellot’s two manuals were quite beneficial for foreigners since they just learn the English language informally and by ear as a foreign language. Immigrants might learn the correct spelling of the words since there are given homophones, which are different spelling with similar pronunciation like hole-whole. These two manuals were written for French immigrants in Britain and they might learn better as there are given everyday dialogues with French translation. It is possible that they need to know everyday conversation to speak with local people and do their jobs before learning complicated grammar rules or literature. But, as Howatt mentioned there

were some spelling mistakes in the book, for example, the word “breakfast” is written in two different ways in one dialogue as “breafeast” in the middle of the dialogue and “breakfast” at the end of the dialogue. Even if there are some shortcomings in the book, it could be very useful in those days and immigrants could use it practically and at the same time, those books are recognized as a first generation of teaching English as a foreign language book [3]. The other teacher was Claudius Holyband, master of teaching methods and using language teaching activities in his lessons. He taught the French language in England to rich families’ children individually and later open schools, where pupils learn the French language. Moreover, when literature is reviewed, we can read about John Florio, who was not only a language teacher but also a textbook writer and linguist. Howatt said that “Although he is best known as a teacher of Italian, Florio also claimed to be a teacher of English as a foreign language” [3]. He wrote two books called First Fruit and Second Fruit, which contain Italian and English dialogue. His books can be used both for studying Italian and English language at the same time, so he can claim to be English as a foreign language teacher. Another author, a French merchant named George Mason wrote the manual “Grammaire Angloise” in 1622. According to Howatt, it is pedagogically thin and linguistically unreliable. This book might not be reliable to learn English grammar as Howatt mentioned as the author was not the textbook writer or language teacher but a trader [3]. However, he gave a new verb form now called continuous tense, “I am going “, which is an essential part of the English grammar and this finding contributed to the further development of the grammar.

The next scientist is Jan Amos Comenius, one of the geniuses in not only instructing language but also in pedagogy. Ellie Boyadzhieva argued, “The beginnings of the theory of foreign language teaching can be traced back to the seventeenth century when Jan Amos Comenius published his views of the educational system in its various aspects in his famous *Didactica Magna* completed around 1631 and published in 1657” [1]. In his works, he wrote about teaching methods and according to Howatt, he thinks in studying a foreign language mother tongue plays an important role [3]. He was in the

opinion of without a mother tongue it is difficult to master another language. When he began to work in a pansophical school in a small-town called Saros Patak in Hungary, He was disappointed pupil's background knowledge and boring lessons conducted by teachers. Consequently, he wrote "The world of the senses in Pictures". In this book author use pictures in learning new words, teachers should speak about the picture first or if it is possible, they should bring a real object to the classroom. And children ought to tell their ideas about the picture and after discussing the picture they may read a given text. Pupils may draw pictures themselves and they may color given pictures in the book. This method might influence enormously teaching foreign languages as learners draw pictures or color them, they remember vocabulary easily. It can be a very helpful method for kinesthetic learners. He used such a great method in teaching the Latin language at school. However, his audio-visual method did not gain popularity at that time because to prepare textbooks many artists and book writers were demanded and many people did not want such hard work. In the history of language teaching, Comenius did great work, his methods are used even in modern nowadays lessons, his great two books, the Janua and the Orbis pictus were used hundred years after his death [3].

According to Howatt, educating English as a second language was a rare situation in the UK, compared to the seventeenth century. At the beginning of century XVIII, teaching the English language expanded slowly, but later after the middle of the century, it is spread more quickly. Before 1700, educating the English language began in France, The Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany and then came to the Mediterranean and Baltic countries at last at the end of the eighteenth-century in Russia and Bengal [3]. Outside Britain, instructing English as a foreign language was initiated in the Netherlands and continued in the 17th century. In European countries, when learning the English language, French was used as a medium language. Textbooks, which were written in the English language with French translation were more popular compared to other ones. In the 17th century in Germany people were interested in English literature

especially Shakespeare's work. For this reason, Henry Offelen's Double-Grammar for Germans to learn English and For Englishmen to learn German Tongue (1687) and other books that contain everyday conversation and word lists, grammar rules, were written used widely as resources in learning the English language in Germany. At that time also in other European countries, the English language was becoming popular gradually. Firstly, in Portugal and later in Spain, English was taught as a foreign language and many textbooks were published to learn and teach English, one of them is Jacob de Castro's "Grammatica Lusitani-Anglica, a double-grammar printed in 1731. Nevertheless, foreign languages were taught in Europe extensively, they were not taught with the syllabus. Teachers might choose any books or resources that were they wanted to use. According to Brumfit foreign languages were not included in the primary curriculum till 1960 in Britain, but were taught in grammar and private schools [2]. However, some educational organizations were established to solve such a problem in language training, which is above mentioned. In Europe, the European Union's growing progress gave new focus to language education, driven by the influential publications of the Council of Europe, which started to emerge in the late 1960s. In English-speaking countries, initiative organizations such as British Council started to expand educating the English language all over the world. Nevertheless, there was a problem that foreign language teachers should refresh their teaching methods and need help with teaching resources and other materials. Later other international organizations were established to support and spread English language teaching in the world. For instance, in 1966 Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), in 1967 International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Languages (IATEFL), in 1967 British Association for Applied Linguistics was organized and actively interested in aspects of the education of language teachers [2]. Because of establishing such educational organizations and their impact, the quality of teaching foreign languages improved enormously. According to J. Jalolov et al "In fact, even in 1974, at least one FL was compulsory in all but two European countries (Ireland and the United Kingdom, apart

from Scotland). Pupils in upper secondary education learn at least two Foreign languages in Belgium's Flemish community, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Greece, Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Slovakia" [4]. Several European countries have adapted their foreign language teaching to the criteria given by the language policy of the Council of Europe. In particular, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), has had a strong influence on foreign language education over the years.

Conclusion. By 1998 nearly all schools in Europe at least one Foreign language was taught, the only exception being the Republic of Ireland, where school children learn both Irish and English, but neither is considered a Foreign language. All in all, in the early years, Latin was taught as a foreign language in the education system, later the French language was lingua franca that many aristocrats learned this language to read traditional literature in Europe and now English is a worldwide language, that in almost all countries in the world it is studied as a foreign language.

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