

HISTORY OF DIDACTICS OF LANGUAGES-CULTURES AND HISTORY OF IDEAS

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In this August 2024 version for the christianpuren.com website, we have updated the Internet links to the articles quoted, which are available online.

Abstract

The aim of this article is to present and defend the following three theses. **Thesis no. 1:** A transition from one didactic configuration to another occurs when social demands, expectations and needs have evolved to a point of rupture with those on the basis of which the previous configuration was built. **Thesis no. 2:** The conception of historical ruptures between different didactic configurations and the corresponding methodological constructions is based in each era on the contemporary ideological model of change and social progress. **Thesis no. 3:** The strong parallelism between managerial and didactic conceptions throughout history is due to the simultaneous influences and partly identical stakes in the two fields of management and teaching. In conclusion, we put forward the hypothesis that the didactics of languages-cultures will "in the years to come, in addition to project-based pedagogy, move towards other pedagogical orientations that are also already known, such as differentiated pedagogy, negotiation pedagogy and contract pedagogy": this combination of pedagogies, which will have to take place within the new "action-oriented approach", "has yet to be invented, but we already know that it will necessarily be in tune with the ideas of its time. It's obvious that we can never escape our time, but knowledge of past times at least enables us to live in it with a minimum of salutary distancing, and to act in it with the minimum of necessary intelligence".

Introduction

In the course of my research into the history of Didactics of languages-cultures (DLC) in the XXth century, I have often been struck by the decisive influence, within this discipline, exerted by the system of ideas dominant at any given time in society as a whole (by its "ideological porosity", in other words), and particularly, over the last half-century, by the repeated analogies between its ideological models of innovation and design and those already in force several years earlier in company management. In this article, I propose to present and analyze this phenomenon.

We'd like to clarify two points first, so that the rest of this article can be properly understood:

-I'm using "ideology" here in the neutral sense of a "system of ideas" which, as such, tends to become increasingly coherent and exclusive, and consequently to spread, within a given society, into as many areas of thought and action as possible. It's in this sense that "liberal ideology" is much talked about these days, where individual freedom is seen as producing the best results everywhere and in everything.

-The following table defines what I mean by "didactic configuration"¹:

Didactic configuration	
Components	Examples
a reference social language competence	occasionally exchange information with strangers
a reference social cultural competence	master the intercultural effects of representations during language exchange
a reference use (or "social") action	language interaction
a reference learning (or "school") task	the simulation exercise
a methodological reference construction	the "communicative approach"

My three theses concerning innovation models and didactic design models in our discipline are as follows:

Thesis no. 1: *A transition from one didactic configuration to another occurs when social demands, expectations and needs have evolved to a point of rupture with those on the basis of which the previous configuration was built.*

Thesis no. 2: *The conception of historical ruptures between different didactic configurations and the corresponding methodological constructions is based in each era on the contemporary ideological model of change and social progress.*

Thesis no. 3: *The strong parallelism between managerial and didactic conceptions throughout history is due to the simultaneous influences and partly identical stakes in the two fields of management and teaching.*

These three theses are closely interrelated:

-Social demands, expectations and needs, on the one hand, and ideologies of change and social progress, on the other, are in a recursive relationship: they are both cause and consequence;

¹ For a more detailed presentation of this concept and its illustration by all those that followed in the XXth century, see PUREN Christian 2006b, p. 39.

-Identical issues in management and education are driven by the same social demands, expectations and needs, and by the parallel influences of the same ideological models of change and social progress.

Thesis no. 1

A transition from one didactic configuration to another occurs when social demands, expectations and needs have evolved to a point of rupture with those on the basis of which the previous configuration was built.

The following lines from the *Circular of November 15, 1901* –which herald the great historical break between traditional "grammar-translation" methodology and direct methodology– seem to me on this point clear enough to dispense with any commentary:

The teaching of modern languages, despite the progress made in recent years, has not produced the results we were entitled to expect from the zeal and knowledge of our teachers.²

Our students do versions and themes well, but few would be able to effortlessly write correspondence or carry on a conversation. And yet, the main aim of teaching foreign languages is to learn how to speak and write them.

If this goal is not achieved by the end of the course of study, the teaching has failed.

A working knowledge of modern languages has become a necessity for businessmen and industrialists, as well as for scholars and academics.

At high school and college, modern languages should not be taught like dead languages. They should not be used as an instrument of literary culture or intellectual gymnastics.

We need to employ the method that will most quickly and surely give the student effective possession of these languages.

This is the direct method.

Circular of November 15 on the teaching of modern languages.
Bulletin Administratif du Ministère de l'Instruction Publique.
N° 1495, November 23, 1901, p. 896.

It seems to me that the same thesis no. 1 is validated by two recent developments in teaching:

-Since the 1970s-1980s, when the social objective of reference became that of preparing students for occasional encounters with native speakers of a foreign language-culture (during occasional trips, particularly for tourism), the communicative approach has emerged with the publication of the Council of Europe's *Threshold Levels*: when we meet people we don't know, the natural challenge is language communication (the reciprocal exchange of information) and language interaction (acting on each other through speech acts).

-In the 2000s, the action-oriented perspective of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* published by the same Council of Europe (henceforth "CEFR", COE 2001) began to take account of a new social objective linked to the progress of European integration, and which consists in preparing learners to work in a foreign language, in their own country or in a foreign country, with native speakers of different languages-cultures (including those of their mother language-culture), as is already the case, for example, in multinational companies, or in universities where students from all countries study together in the language of the host country. It's no longer just a question of *speaking with* the Other (communicating with him/her to inform oneself and others) by *acting on* him/her through language, but of *acting with* him/her in a foreign language (carrying out "social actions" with him/her, to use the expression used by the authors of the *CEFR*).

² This passage from an official instruction intended for teachers illustrates a first strategic constant, right up to the present day, of this very particular kind of document: compliments addressed to teachers are all the more pronounced the more bitter the pill they are being asked to swallow...

Thesis no. 2

The conception of historical ruptures and transitions between different didactic configurations is based in each era on the contemporary ideological model of change and social progress.

Frank MARCHAND, who was Director of the École Normale d'Instituteurs de Paris for many years, writes about the reality of "pedagogical progress" in the official teaching of French as a native language over the last century:

It's hard to say whether these changes can be described as progress. However, it should be noted that a number of these changes are exactly in line with the evolution of social values outside school. To move from a school where we evolve from effort to pleasure, from censorship to freedom, from copying to invention, is also to move from one social state to another. In this respect, progress in pedagogy is but a copy of "social progress".
(1985, p. 123)

This phenomenon of "ideological copying" can be seen throughout the evolution of didactic concepts in language teaching and learning, where the effects of different social ideologies can be identified:

1. The ideology of political revolution

At the end of the 1890s, Charles Schweitzer³, commissioned by the Ministry of Public Instruction to run the first language teacher training courses to be officially organized in France, opened his series of lectures at the Sorbonne on the new direct methodology with the words: "Let us wipe the slate clean from the past!" The formula is not at all rhetorical: in the minds of the direct methodologists –to take up the three main ideological characteristics of the social change model of their time– (1) the fact that their "pedagogical revolution" had been conceived by a small group of specialists and leaders posed no problem for them (cf. the Marxist notion of "avant-garde"...); and it was clear that they were going to lead this revolution with the idea that it would be all the more effective for being (2) brutal and (3) radical. Thus, in the official instructions of the 1900s, we can identify positions as extreme as they are unrealistic (such as the absolute ban on the use of the native L1 French in class in 1908), which can only be explained by such an ideology of rupture conceived by a thinking and acting minority. At the time, there was considerable controversy among language teachers about these innovative instructions, with some of them loudly denouncing the official imposition of direct methodology as what they (rightly, incidentally) called a "pedagogical coup d'état".)

2. The reformist ideology

Another language teacher, René Villard, wrote in *Les Langues Modernes* in 1928:

The "direct method", as practiced from 1902 to 1923, has had its day. We need something new in education, politics and literature.[...] Revolutions do not make men happy, any more than they make methods successful.

Nor was this an isolated point of view at the time, either in modern language didactics or in general pedagogy: the era was indeed marked in all areas of education by what some today would call –depending on their personal ideology– "a regression", or on the contrary "a return to traditional values". Auguste PINLOCHE, another teacher who fought very early and very hard against what he saw as the excesses of official direct methodology, had already written an article in 1908 in *Les Langues modernes*, significantly entitled "Reaction and Progress". The title gives a good indication of the argument developed in the body of the article: the author considers that, given the excesses of direct methodology, a partial return to traditional methodology would be a step forward for language teaching...

³ One of the great direct methodologists of the late 19th^e century, less well known today than his grandson Jean-Paul Sartre...

3. The technological ideology

Audiovisual methodology was developed in France between the late 1950s and early 1960s, at a time intellectually marked by the theme of the "technological revolution". The effect of what we might call "technological ideology" (i.e., the idea that technology itself would bring progress) was reflected in the design of the audiovisual teaching unit, built on the basis of maximum didactic integration around a single medium (the "basic dialogue") whose presentation called on coordinated image and sound reproduction techniques.

4. The communicative ideology

The so-called "communicative" approach was developed in Europe in the early 1970s, at a time intellectually marked by the "information and communication revolution". The trace of communicative ideology is particularly evident in the courses that sought to systematize this approach, known as "all-communicative", in which communication in a foreign language tends to be both the sole end and the only means used to achieve it.⁴

5. The individualist ideology

Until the 1970s-1980s, didactic thinking was "teaching-centeredness" (and not "teacher-centeredness", as teachers had to submit to the prevailing methodological guidelines just as much as their students). The ideological models that had succeeded one another up to that point were different, even radically opposed (tradition vs. revolution vs. reformism), but all stemmed from the same characteristic that could be described as "*collectivist*". The following ideology is, on the contrary, *individualistic*: the search for the good is carried out primarily through individual fulfillment and happiness. Or, to put it another way, individual happiness is a socially legitimate goal in *its own right*.

We can recognize this ideology at work in most of the key concepts of DLC over the last twenty years or so –*individual needs, expectations and motivations, individual learning strategies, individualization, autonomy, self-teaching, resource centers...* including, of course, "learner-centeredness". With regard to this last expression, the use of the singular definite ("*the learner*") does not correspond to the reality of classrooms, where learners are numerous and heterogeneous; nor do the morphological expressions of action ("centeredness", "centered"), which erase the various agents involved (teachers, of course, but also the institution, material designers, trainers, didacticians).⁵

The same kind of coincidence (which of course is no more than chance) could be noted between the demand for learner empowerment in DLC (remarkable in FLE, but also in official French instructions from 1985 onwards) and the appearance in the history of occidental ideas of what Pierre Rosanvallon has called "the auto galaxy" (according to P. Dumouchel and J.-P. Dupuy 1983, p. 17).

This individualistic ideology has inevitably weighed on the place and function assigned in the communicative approach to learner-centeredness, the most obvious effect having been to undermine the formative and collective dimension of all institutional learning, as René RICHTERICH pointed out as early as 1985 :

Other misconceptions would not have arisen if the notion of need had not been constantly associated with those of personal pleasure and satisfaction. Admittedly, it was a question of redefining the central role of the learner in the interplay of the components of training

⁴ Spanish as a foreign language courses *Para empezar. Curso comunicativo de español para extranjeros*, (EDELSA, 1989) or more recently *Prisma. Comienzo. Nivel A1* (Editorial Edinumen, 2005) are good examples. The focus immediately shifts from the presentation of new linguistic forms –in dialogue and then notional-functional form– to a request for reuse in communicative situations (simulated or authentic).

⁵ For a systematic critique (in the sense of "deconstruction") of the notion of "learner-centeredness", I refer readers to my 1995 article.

systems, but institutions and social groups also have needs, and therefore requirements, on which, moreover, those of the individual depend (p. 29).

In the case of the communicative approach, therefore, there has been a historical conjunction which has enabled a pedagogical combination between the model of communication and that of individualism: communication, in this methodology, is primarily conceived as inter-individual communication (cf. its reference exercise, which consists of crossing *peer work* and *information gap*).

It is within this framework of individualist ideology that, unconsciously no doubt, all those who have referred to humanism to promote the communicative approach have situated themselves. Such is the case of J.-L. M. TRIM in 1981, who appeals to "the doctrine of Human Rights and [...] the notion of lifelong education", whose first objective, "to lead each individual to organize his or her own experience", "is placed in the perspective of a learner approach centered on the and his or her motivations" (p. VIII); or Robert GALISSON in 1980, who calls the communicative approach:

-democratic (born of consultation between learners and learners, who debate together about educational goals and how to achieve them);

-humanistic (it places the learner at the center of its concerns and seeks to satisfy his or her needs, by developing the institutional framework that supports them) (p. 23, underlined in the text).

Over the last ten years, digital technologies have reactivated the technological ideology, which has come back to combine with the communicational and individualistic ones. At the crossroads of these three influences are inter-individual communication activities, such as e-mail, chat and audiovisual exchanges using sound and image.

6. The crisis of universalist systems and the idea of progress

It has become commonplace to speak of the crisis of the great political ideologies: the present time is no longer, in the Western world at least, for the construction of those universalist systems which claimed to ensure the progress and happiness of mankind on their own. An identical phenomenon can also be observed in research in the human sciences, where people are more interested in the complementarities between different or even opposing theories, than in the construction of new global theories, none of which will ever be able to apprehend the complexity of reality. Generally speaking, any system claiming total mastery of its field is seen as necessarily simplistic and potentially totalitarian, any single and strong coherence as potentially dogmatic.

In parallel with this crisis of what some have called "one-track thinking" and reinforced by the perverse effects of scientific and technological development, philosophers and sociologists are observing a crisis in the idea of progress in our societies. This is reflected in the evolution of didactic thinking in recent years. The awareness of the rise of eclecticism in language textbooks, the interpretation of this phenomenon as an empirical response to the complexity of teaching-learning practices, the abandonment of the project to develop a "scientific" methodology with universalist pretensions, the introduction of "complex thinking" into didactic thinking (cf. e.g. C. PUREN 1994), are all manifestations of the great porosity of didactics to this crisis of universalist ideologies and the idea of progress. In a 1997 article, I proposed a description of some manifestations of this crisis in language-culture didactics in the form of four reference statements:

- 1. The perception of progress is closely linked to the prevailing values of the moment.*
- 2. Progress in knowledge can be progress in uncertainty.*
- 3. Progress in one area can lead to regression in another.*
- 4. Progress for some can mean regression for others.*

You may wish to refer to this article and the various concrete illustrations I present to illustrate each of these statements.

Thesis no. 3

The strong parallelism between managerial and didactic conceptions throughout history is due to the simultaneous influences and partly identical stakes in the two fields of management and teaching⁶.

A language-culture course, whether 20 hours or a yearlong, is, in French, an "*entreprise*" (in the sense of a project undertaken) which, at least in non-formal adult education, must like any "*entreprise*" (in the sense of a company, a production or service organization)⁷ attract customers, satisfy their expectations, demands and needs, and finally be efficient and profitable in creating added value (in this case, progress in the mastery of the language-culture taught). These intersecting requirements make it essential, in both the didactic and economic fields, to simultaneously apply a modernity model, a supply-demand matching model and a productivity model (the aim is to get learners to produce foreign language so that they are capable of *producing* it afterwards).

This undoubtedly explains the constant parallelism, in the evolution of major ideological orientations, between thinking in didactics of languages-cultures and in company management. Here, schematically presented, are the five major historical models:

1. The Taylorist company and the "teaching machines

Historically, structural exercises can be explained by the combination of a theory of learning (Skinnerian behaviourism), a description of language (distributionalism), the hard core of the American "*Army Method*" (a combination of repetitive, imitative and oral methods: learners intensively repeat oral language models) applied to grammar teaching, and finally the tape recorder (a machine for repeating and imitating human speech at will).

But the "teaching machine" project of the 1950s-1960s, in which teaching took place exclusively in the form of predetermined batteries of structural exercises in the language laboratory, represented an ideological "crossing the line" that can only be understood through the influence of the Taylorist model of productivity dominant in the USA at the time: these batteries of structural exercises were designed at the time and were supposed to function as veritable assembly lines of language automatisms.

2. The "communicating company" (or "communicative-oriented company") and the communicative approach

In the 70s and 80s, the effects of the "information revolution" were felt in both company management and language teaching. At that time, corporate problems were interpreted mainly in terms of dysfunctions in internal communication. Proof that it was indeed an ideology (in the sense of a system of ideas operating on the logic of universality and exclusivity), it then made its effects felt in diverse intellectual fields such as sociology and psychoanalysis: this was the time when, for example, some autism specialists attributed its origins to communication dysfunctions within the family unit...⁸

⁶ In this chapter, I take up the essence of a paper I gave at the RANACLES Congress (Rassemblement National des Centres de Langues de l'Enseignement Supérieur) in Poitiers on November 24, 2007, entitled "From the communicative approach to the action-oriented perspective. On the parallel evolution of innovation and design models in language-culture didactics and company management". Video conference available online at <http://uptv.univ-poitiers.fr/web/canal/61/theme/28/manif/125/video/1180/index.html>.

⁷ The original text plays on the similarity in French between the noun "*entreprise*" (company), and the verbal form "*entreprise*" (undertaken).

⁸ Needless to say, parents of autistic children have been made to feel guilty by such an interpretation... The paradigm currently in vogue in the medical sciences is genetic, and this is the direction in which this pathology is currently being interpreted.

3. The "customer-oriented" company and learner-centeredness

In the 1970s, the notion of the "customer-oriented company" appeared in management: it was no longer enough to have a good product to sell it well, it was necessary to constantly adapt to customer expectations and demands, and to take them into account in the company's entire process, from product design to after-sales service. At the same time, the notion of "learner-centered approach" appeared in didactics.

4. The "project-oriented company" and the social action-oriented approach

As this is the latest development in DLC, with the 2001 *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* outlining a new orientation known as the "(social) action-oriented approach" (SAOA), I'll expand a little here on the continuing parallelism between the evolution of ideas in company management and DLC⁹.

In recent years, company management thinking has been marked by a shift from what we might call a "communication paradigm" to an "action paradigm", which I propose to call more precisely "co-action" to differentiate it from language "interaction" as conceived in the communicative approach. We speak of "project-oriented companies" or "competency-based management".

Here are a few examples of this transition between these paradigms of communication and action, which I will present simply with a statement and a corresponding quotation (all emphasis added):

a. Co-action doesn't just involve communication. Communication can get in the way of co-action, as one provider of a "groupware", or online collaborative work platform, points out:

*In the vast majority of companies, e-mail has become the only collaboration tool used by employees. But **e-mail is not a collaboration tool, it's a communication tool**. It's clear that messaging is no longer adapted to the implicit use companies make of it. This explains why most mailboxes are now extremely saturated (emphasis added).*

Mayeticvillage, *White Paper* January 2004

b. Co-action determines upstream communication (its production).

*In managerial discourse and practice, **knowledge sharing tends all too often to be thought of in terms of the technical devices that facilitate transmission and exchange**. Analyses produced by economics and management sciences help us to understand the human and social dimension of knowledge.*

*Over the course of two days, researchers in information and communication sciences attempted to reintegrate reflection on this sharing into situational contexts, whether in terms of structural constraints (economic and social logics) or conjunctural adaptations (crises). In these different types of situations, they have insisted in particular on **the need to take into account the different logics of action at work and their dialectics**. This book brings together the texts from these two days of meetings. (METZGER J.-P. ed. 2004)*

c. Co-action determines downstream communication (its use).

*One of the most striking developments in information systems research in recent years has been the focus on the use of these systems. It is **no longer simply a question of modeling information in terms of its content, but in terms of the uses to which it will be put**. This means taking into account both the characteristics of the problems*

⁹ Between the publication of the French version of this article in 2007 and the present English translation in 2024, this SAOA has been widely developed and implemented in textbooks. Cf. the bibliography devoted to this methodology on my website (<https://www.christianpuren.com/bibliographies/perspective-actionnelle/>), the articles by my colleague Ahmet Acar on ResearchGate (<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ahmet-Acar-8/research>), and our joint book Acar Ahmet & Puren Christian (2024). [Note from June 2024]

to be solved by the information and the particularities of the users of these systems. Contexts of use are expanding, from different types of monitoring (technological, environmental, competitive, legal, etc.) to strategic monitoring and business intelligence.
DAVID Amos 2005, p. 35.

We can already see that this question of the relationship between communication and action is now being asked in other fields. Here are three examples, in the same form of a statement illustrated by a quotation.

d. We need to examine the relationship between communication and action in areas of public intervention.

NGOs, from activists to communicators

For many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), existence today means communicating. Whether it's humanitarian aid, development programs, the defense of human rights or the environment, "know-how" and non-governmental activism are less and less conceivable without "getting the word out".

[...] While it's not illegitimate for an association to highlight the causes it defends and its concrete achievements, the risk of excess is real when offensive communication is at work. Development and humanitarian NGOs often have different approaches, with the former finding it difficult to publicize projects that are long-term, less visible and generally run by local partners. The latter, on the other hand, are more in tune with today's highly contracted media time.

*[...] **Communication cannot therefore be an end in itself, which would call into question the basic principles of non-governmental action.** But it is difficult to strike a balance between intelligent, high-quality communication that respects all stakeholders, and the constraints intrinsic to the world of communication.* (RYFMAN P. 2006, p. VI)

e. We need to rethink the relationship between communication and action in the field of L1 didactics.

*[In the didactics of French as a native language in France, **the definition of cognitive-language activities**] has come under the increasing sway of the "all-communicative" approach, the use of which often resembles a headlong rush. Not that we would benefit from a return to the old blindness to **this dimension**, but it needs to be **translated into each task according to** its intrinsic properties, in particular the learning objective and the cognitive reorganizations it implies* (BERNIÉ J.P. 2001)

f. Co-action is necessary, beyond communication, to create true cultural understanding.

*Culture is thus a real complex. Those who express themselves in it do not necessarily understand it better than those who are strangers to it. A superior understanding can only be achieved through **a laborious process that is not only communicative, but above all cooperative and even competitive**, based on the effectiveness of interactions with others, and accompanied by the possibility of mutual contestation.* (DEMORGON J. 2005)

With these last two quotes, we've moved closer to the field of language-culture didactics. The communicative approach, in fact, naturally placed tasks at the service of communication and favored communicative tasks. And because of the influence of this contemporary communicative approach on the intercultural approach, it was assumed that intercultural training could be achieved solely through communication with the Other.

It is in this new ideological context that the emergence of the action-oriented approach in the 2001 CEFR must be placed. Here again, I'll confine myself to a typical quotation:

A reference framework for learning, teaching and assessing modern languages, which is transparent, coherent and as exhaustive as possible, must be situated in relation to a

very general overall representation of language use and learning. The perspective favored here is, very generally too, action-oriented, in that it sees language users and learners above all as social actors who have to accomplish tasks (which are not solely linguistic) in given circumstances and environments, within a particular field of action. While speech acts take place in the context of language activities, these activities are themselves part of actions in a social context, which alone give them their full meaning. A task exists insofar as the action is carried out by one (or more) subject(s), who strategically mobilize(s) the competences at their disposal to achieve a given result. The action-oriented perspective therefore also takes into account cognitive, affective and volitional resources, as well as all the capacities possessed and applied by the social actor. (p. 15, emphasis added)

Whereas the communicative approach focused primarily on language interaction, and its reference act was to *act on others* through language (speech acts), in the actional perspective it becomes *acting with others* (social action), for which language communication is only one of the means, and no longer the goal.

Buy way of a conclusion...

... and not "Conclusion", because in the realm of ideas, history doesn't stand still, and we always think within the framework of our system of ideas, even when that system is, as it is now, one of criticism of all systems of ideas. Moreover, experience with the project-based approach is already long enough for a critical analysis of its perverse effects to be available, both in terms of its implementation in business (cf. e.g. J.-P. BOUTINET 2001) and in pedagogy (cf. e.g. I. BORDALLO & J.-P. GINESTET 1995).

It's because we can no longer adhere, as we did in the past, to any system or even methodological certainty in language-culture didactics, that *values* have become indispensable as the only possible guides to action and the only possible safeguards against possible drifts; in other words, it has become necessary for didacticians to integrate an ethical perspective into their reflections and proposals, and for teachers to receive training in deontology. This movement began in France in the 90s¹⁰, and we can only hope that it will spread and grow. In my aforementioned 1997 article, I personally ended with a profession of faith that I will repeat here almost verbatim:

a) I believe in the **values of conscience**, and I therefore consider it progress to question progress itself, its ideological functioning, its limits, its self-serving exploitations, its contradictions, its perverse effects.

b) I believe in the **value of diversity**, in didactics as in politics, society or the biosphere, and that's why I see the eclectic period we're currently living through in language didactics as potentially more progressive than the earlier era of constituted methodologies.

c) I believe in the **values of responsibility, freedom and creativity**, which is why I would consider it a decisive step forward to put an end to all the dogmas and prohibitions that are still all too common among some of those in charge of initial and in-service training for language teachers in France.

d) I believe in the **value of movement**, which is at least what's left of progress when we're no longer quite sure which direction it's going to take, or which direction it should take. In language didactics, too, Antonio Machado's famous lines are perfectly relevant:

*Caminante, non hay camino,
se hace el camino al andar...* *Walker, know that there is no path,
The path is made by walking...*

e) Finally, I am a firm believer in the **values of debate** in all its forms: discussion, dissension, discordance, divergence and dissent. The sciences can only ensure the progress of knowledge,

¹⁰ Cf. some journal titles in bibliography.

and democracy the progress of collective awareness and action, if not only the right to, but also the need for, public controversy is recognized and implemented on an ongoing basis.

Taking these values into account in language-culture didactics - both in research and in the teaching-learning relationship, which is the central focus of this discipline - will undoubtedly orient it in the years to come, not only towards project-based pedagogy, but also towards other pedagogical orientations that are already well known, such as differentiated pedagogy, negotiation pedagogy and contract pedagogy. What the official instructions for the teaching and learning of modern languages in French schools now call "action pedagogy" will undoubtedly involve a combination of these old and new forms.

This pedagogy has yet to be invented, but we already know that it will necessarily be in tune with the ideas of its time. It's obvious that we can never escape our time, but knowledge of past times at least enables us to live in it with a minimum of salutary distancing, and to act in it with the minimum of necessary intelligence.

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