

Harold E. Palmer's London Lectures and Related Publications (1915-21)

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Abstract

In this article, we present new findings from primary sources relating to Harold Palmer's teaching at University College, London (1915-1921) and at the School of Oriental Studies, University of London (1917-1921), in order to clarify the development of his thinking with regard to language learning and teaching methodology, as expressed in *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917) and *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921).

The body of the article presents a chronological survey of Palmer's academic lectures at the University of London. We incorporate within this survey summaries of his contemporary publications, and indicate ways in which these may be said to reflect his teaching at the time of writing. In Section 1, the contents of Palmer's 1915-17 lectures at U.C.L. on "Methods of Language Teaching" and "Methods of Language Study" are discussed, with reference to a previously neglected 1916 article in the journal *Modern Language Teaching*. Also considered is the relationship of these lectures and the 1916 article to Palmer's 1916 textbook publications, as well as to *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917). In Section 2, on the basis of presentation of data with regard to the contents of Palmer's lectures at U.C.L. between 1917 and 1921, an apparent shift away from a major focus on language teaching and towards (previously less pronounced) interests in language learning and general linguistics is identified. Finally, in Section 3, we see that Palmer was probably the first ever teacher in the University of

London of a subject termed “linguistics,” from late 1918 or early 1919, at S.O.S. His lectures in this area, though, are likely to have related primarily to the practical objective of preparing missionaries (and latterly S.O.S. students generally) for the learning of “remote” (Oriental) languages. We point to some possible connections between this teaching and the trends identified in Section 2, before concluding with a brief discussion of *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921).

Introduction

Soon after the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Harold E. Palmer escaped with his wife and daughter to England from Verviers, Belgium. There, he had been running his own small language “Institute,” experimenting with a variety of teaching techniques and producing learning materials (mainly for English, but also for Esperanto and French). On arrival in Folkestone, he set about organising a school for the teaching of English to other refugees, but a few months later the family moved to London, where Palmer had been offered a job teaching French in a secondary school (Jones, 1950a: 90-91; Anderson, 1969: 136-40).

Some time in 1915, Palmer must have visited Daniel Jones, who had recently been promoted to a Readership in the Department of Phonetics at University College, London (U.C.L.) (see Collins and Mees (forthcoming) for further description and analysis of Jones’s early career and the development of the Department). Palmer — who, at 38, was the older of the two by four and a half years — had been corresponding with Jones since 1907, had met him by chance in 1912 on a cross-channel ferry (see Jones, 1950b: 4), and had latterly become an active contributor to *Le Maître Phonétique*, the journal of the International Phonetic Association (I.P.A.), of which Jones was co-editor with Paul Passy. One reason for the meeting with Jones in 1915 may have been to discuss Palmer’s forthcoming publication for the I.P.A., *What is Phonetics?* (Palmer, 1915), which had presumably been commissioned, maybe by Jones himself,

prior to the outbreak of the war.¹ It is clear, in any case, that Jones already had a sufficiently high estimation of Palmer’s abilities to invite him to give some public lectures at U.C.L., on “Methods of Language Teaching,” in the Autumn term of 1915 (Jones, 1950b: 5). Thus began, in serendipitous fashion, a six-year period of intensive and productive work (which lasted until Palmer’s departure for Japan early in 1922) whose importance in the twentieth century history of English language teaching and applied linguistics has been indicated by, among others, Howatt (1984).

Palmer’s 1915 and 1916 lectures, Howatt (1984: 232) suggests, “formed the basis for his first major work, *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages*,” published in 1917. Howatt (ibid.) continues:

To make the transition from refugee English language teacher to the authorship of a classic text in the field inside three years was a phenomenal achievement. Obviously it would not have been possible if he had not thought about the issues deeply while working in his school in Belgium, or without the stimulus of his contacts with Daniel Jones and his colleagues in the Phonetics Department at University College.

Palmer’s first lectures would appear to have marked a crucial point of convergence between theory and practice in the history of foreign language teaching, signalling a new academic status for the discussion of methodological issues, and the beginning of a period of work for Palmer (extending into his years in Japan) which involved an important and original “fusion of the two reforming traditions inherited from the previous century: the applied linguistic approach of the Reform Movement and the [...] methodology of the Direct Method” (Howatt, 1984: 212). As Howatt (1984: 214) emphasises, “The Jones-Palmer association effective-

¹ Smith (forthcoming) provides further details of Palmer’s publications, including various pre-war contributions to *Le Maître Phonétique*.

ly ensured that one of the ‘ground rules’ of English as a foreign language [this century] was an applied linguistic philosophy.”

While catalysed by Jones’s further invitations to Palmer to participate in research work in the Department of Phonetics and to take over Spoken English and phonetics classes, the major crucible for development of Palmer’s applied linguistic philosophy undoubtedly remained his academic lecture courses, expanded from the original Autumn 1915 series and entitled variously “Methods of Language Teaching,” “Methods of Language Study,” “Theory of Language Study” or “Linguistics” over the period in question. While the overall importance of Palmer’s work in London has been previously established, neither the contents of nor the likely audience for his lectures during the period have been investigated in detail, despite the influence their planning might be assumed to have had on the publications by Palmer which have most often been described as “classic” or “definitive”: *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917) and *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a). In view of their significance in contributing to the establishment of a new and influential “applied linguistic” approach to language teaching, investigation of the relationship between Palmer’s academic lectures and his major 1917 and 1921 publications would therefore appear to be justified.

In this article, we hope primarily to shed new light on the contents of Harold E. Palmer’s lectures between 1915 and 1921. Our findings are based mainly on analysis of calendars, reports, minutes of meetings and other archive materials at University College, London (U.C.L.) — where Palmer taught throughout this period — and the School of Oriental and African Studies (S.O.A.S.), University of London — at whose predecessor, the School of Oriental Studies (S.O.S.), Palmer taught from (probably) 1917 to 1921. Our intention is, by and large, simply to present new factual data relating to Palmer’s academic lectures which might form the basis for future overall reassessments of his work (including his publications) during this period. In this article, then, we do not engage

in prolonged interpretation of the data, although we do indicate some ways in which our findings might be considered significant, in particular in relation to interpretation of Palmer’s major 1917 and 1921 publications.

1. 1915-17 lectures and publications

Jones (1950b: 5) recalls that “in October 1915 [Palmer] was, on my recommendation, invited to deliver a course of evening lectures on methods of language teaching at University College, London. These lectures attracted large audiences, mainly of school teachers, and were the forerunners of many other successful courses.” Also, in his (unpublished) “Report of the Phonetics Department: for the 1915-16 Session” (i.e., academic year), Jones comments on Palmer’s work for the Department as follows: “Mr. H.E. Palmer was appointed temporarily to assist the department during this session. He [...] gave 3 courses of lectures on methods of Language Teaching. His work has been most successful, and his course of public lectures attracted large audiences” (Jones, 1916?: 2).

According to administrative documents in U.C.L. archives, Palmer appears to have given three public lectures in 1915, under the official rubric of “Methods of Language Teaching” (RUCC3). Regarding their contents, Jones (1950a: 91) recalls one of them as follows: “I remember well his giving in 1915 an illuminating lecture on limited vocabulary in which he exhibited some well thought out word lists [...]” This particular lecture may, then, have related to work on English vocabulary control which Palmer later remembered having started in earnest in 1911 (Palmer, 1936: 15; see also Bongers, 1947: 75). Alternatively or additionally, considering that his lecture audience was probably composed largely of modern language teachers (cf. Jones’s (1950b: 5) reference to “school teachers,” cited above), it may have related to still earlier work regarding the vocabulary of French, embodied, according to Palmer himself, in his (1907) French textbook and “inspired by the Berlitz selection”

(Palmer, 1936: 15). It is clear, in any case, that vocabulary limitation was a central element in Palmer's pedagogical thinking as early as 1915, accounting as this topic seems to have done for the entirety of one of his first three lectures at U.C.L..

Further light may be thrown on the possible contents of Palmer's first three lectures, and thus on his pedagogical thinking at the beginning of his London years, through reference to a May 1916 article which he wrote for the journal *Modern Language Teaching*, entitled "Some principles of language teaching" (Palmer, 1916a). This article has not been accorded attention in the past (it is not referenced in existing bibliographies of Palmer's work), and has been cited, so far as we are aware, only by Tickoo (1995). Given its significance, however, in being one of Palmer's first published statements on principles of linguistic pedagogy, we present below a full synopsis of its contents:

Summary of Palmer, 1916a ('Some Principles')

This article is divided into three sections, as follows:

I. *Vocabulary and its aspects* (pp. 65-68)

*The five aspects of the vocabable

1. The phonetic aspect
2. The orthographic aspect
3. The inflexional aspect
4. The grammatical (or functional) aspect
5. The semantic aspect

*Degrees of speciality

*Degrees of frequency

*Degrees of intercombinability

II. *The vicious tendencies of the student of language* (pp. 68-70)

1. Neglect of the peculiar characteristics of the foreign language
2. Illegitimate importation of elements of the mother-tongue into

the foreign language

3. Artificial separation of words
4. Non-recognition of the status of group-words
5. Giving preference to strong forms
6. Reliance on the visual instead of the auditive memory
7. Mental translation into the mother-tongue

III. *Synthetic construction v. substitution* (pp. 70-74)

Object: "to outline a system of language study differing fundamentally from both Direct Method and the Method of Synthetic Construction. We may term it the Substitution Method"

1. Memorize one or more complete sentences in the foreign language
2. Learn the meaning of every memorized sentence
3. Isolate one of the sections and replace it rapidly and successively by a number of substitutes, each of which has the same or nearly the same grammatical function as the original, but a different semantic value
4. Isolate and replace by substitutive elements other sections of the original sentence
5. Multiply the results by cross-combination

Before considering the contents of this article in more detail, let us present the speculation that — having been written soon after the end of Palmer's first (Autumn, 1915) series of three public lectures — the three (somewhat independent) sections of the article might correspond to the contents of the individual lectures Palmer in fact gave. This view is supported by the fact that the first section of the article treats principles of vocabulary control, the topic referred to by Jones (1950a: 91) as having constituted the theme of one of the public lectures. In any case, Section I of the article enables us to reconstruct at least some of the likely contents of the lecture referred to by Jones (*ibid.*) which related to

vocabulary control.

This section begins with the axiomatic statement that “The whole of the language is contained in its vocabulary” (p. 65). Vocables (a term invented to capture “words”, “phrases” and “inflexions”) may be considered from different points of view: phonetic, orthographic, inflexional, grammatical (or functional), and semantic. They may be classified according to their degree of speciality or generality, degree of frequency, and degree of intercombinability with other vocables. In the ideal (teaching) method each of these factors should be taken into consideration to ensure proportion, economy, interest, and general efficiency. Clearly, these concerns prefigure Palmer’s better-known work on vocabulary control in the 1930s.

Section 2 of the 1916 article appears somewhat unrelated in content to either the preceding or the following section, and implications for pedagogy are not made explicit. On p. 117 of Palmer’s (1917) *Scientific Study*, however, we read that “The integral memorizing of a number of models is the best means of obviating the pernicious habits to be described in a later section under the heading ‘The Six Vicious Tendencies’ (these tendencies, with numbers 3 and 4 from the 1916 article collapsed into one, are described on pp. 263-265). Thus, the connection between Sections 2 and 3 of Palmer’s 1916 article is stated more clearly in his later (1917) work.

We shall delay discussion of Section 3 of the 1916 article, returning in the interim to Palmer’s remaining lecture courses in the 1915-16 and 1916-17 academic Sessions. Aside from being invited to take over some phonetics and spoken English classes for foreign students from the beginning of the calendar year 1916, Palmer was recommended by Jones to give two further courses of lectures, this time not public but *within* the Department, in the second and third terms of the 1915-16 Session (UCMSM, 8 December, 1915; 8 March, 1916). Details of these lecture courses do not appear in the U.C.L. calendar for this Session (UCAC5)

since they were not originally scheduled, but lectures for the following (1916-17) Session *were* scheduled in advance, and are listed as follows:

Palmer’s U.C.L. Lectures: Oct. 1916-Sept. 1917

Methods of Language Teaching

S27. Methods of Language Teaching

Tuesday at 5.30.

S28. A similar Course, specially adapted to the needs of missionaries and other Students of remote languages.

Third Term: Monday at 5.30. (source: UCAC 6: 38)

From this listing, it appears that in the 1916-17 Session Palmer gave, for the first time, a course of departmental lectures on “Methods of Language Teaching,” lasting for a period of three full terms. Although the detailed contents are unstated in the above listing, the planning of this year-long course of lectures (perhaps, in the summer of 1916) may be assumed to have contributed considerably to the accomplishment of Palmer’s classic and comprehensive work *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages*, which was apparently completed by January, 1917 (this is the date of the book’s Dedicatory Preface (Palmer, 1917: 5), although the volume itself was not published until July of the same year, that is, at the end of the 1916-17 academic Session).

Returning now to Section 3 of Palmer’s May, 1916 article (Palmer, 1916a), we shall see how these pages relate to his other 1916 publications (books containing exercises based on substitution tables for the learning of English and French), before considering, finally, the extent to which *Scientific Study* (1917) may be seen to have transcended his early pedagogical thinking (as revealed in the 1916 article and other publications).

As is clear from the synopsis above, Section 3 of the 1916 article purports to present an alternative to the traditional “Method of Synthetic

Construction,” an alternative which Palmer himself terms “Substitution Method.” In presenting the contrast between “traditional” and “modern” methods in these terms, Palmer deliberately and explicitly distances himself from the—by then—commonplace distinction between “Translation” and “Direct” Methods (p. 71). What Palmer emphasises is that the reformers’ prevailing “doctrine of the ‘Total Exclusion of the Mother-Tongue’ has obscured the issue, and that the truer rallying cry for the Reform Movement [should] have been ‘The Total Exclusion of Synthetic Construction’” (ibid.). “Synthetic Construction” itself is described as the process students are traditionally engaged in, of attempting painstakingly to piece together into sentences the units of the target language which have been previously decomposed (analysed) for them by the method-writer, with reference to explicit rules which have also been provided. In contrast with this inefficient process, Palmer proposes the “Substitution Method,” though not as “the one royal road to successful language study, nor the panacea for all linguistic ills” (p. 71). The process engaged in by the learner is as outlined in our synopsis above, and the article concludes with exemplification of the stages involved, taking the Japanese sentence “*watakushi'wasore'omi'mas*” as the “model sentence.”

Section 3 of Palmer’s 1916 article clearly relates to two other publications in the same year (Palmer, 1916b; 1916c), which appear to be exemplifications of the “Substitution Method” in practice as opposed to theory (a contemporary reviewer (Anon., 1916: 230) also points out that “The principles on which these books are based have been given in the May issue of *Modern Language Teaching*”). It seems likely that these texts (and Section 3 of the 1916 article) offer a fairly full representation of the “Palmer Method” as this had developed out of Palmer’s teaching in Verviers; in other words, Palmer’s pedagogical thinking at this time appears to have been focused on the use of substitution tables and related “fluency exercises.”

Substitution is described in more detail in the Introduction to Palmer (1916b) as follows:

Substitution may be described as the process by which any authentic sentence may be multiplied indefinitely by substituting any of its words or word-groups by others of the same grammatical family and within certain semantic limits (p. iii).

And Palmer goes on to provide an explicit justification in terms of learning theory for the procedures he recommends:

It is more than probable that a process of unconscious substitution is the one by which we learn at an early age the intricacies of our own language, and possess before even knowing the meaning of the term grammar nine-tenths of the grammatical machinery of our own tongue (pp. iii-iv)

While Prabhu (1985: 166) makes the point that, with his emphasis on the possibilities of “indefinite multiplication,” Palmer was (thus) “very aware of the generative character of language structure” (cf. also Howatt (1984: 237) and Barrutia (1965: 63)), Diller (1971: 40, 42; cf., also, pp. 3-4) defines Palmer’s (1916b) “pattern drills” as audiolingualist *avant la lettre*; perhaps, further analysis (beyond the scope of this article) will reveal that some truth lies in both directions.

In addition to the lecture courses we have detailed above, Palmer gave an unstated number of public lectures in 1916 (and, possibly, January-February, 1917)—not, this time, on “Methods of Language Teaching,” but on “The Ergonic Theory of Colloquial French” (RUCC 4: 32). These lectures were also related to the 1916 publications we have been discussing (“ergonic construction” was the term Palmer soon came to prefer for what he had earlier been terming “Substitution Method” (see Palmer, 1921a: 175-177), while *Scientific Study* (1917) contains, as an appendix, a “Condensed and Abridged Scheme for a French Ergonic Chart,” in other words, a kind of master-substitution table for the whole of the French language!

Palmer was also working on a minimum vocabulary for French which he exhibited at U.C.L., and entitled “the French Microcosm” (Palmer, 1936: 15). The contents of Palmer’s 1916 article, along with his work on the “ergonics” and the “microcosm” of French all find a place in *Scientific*

Study, as may be seen from the following annotated synopsis of this latter work. At the same time, however, it may be seen that many parts of this work appear to have no parallel in Palmer's 1916 article or concurrent research work, and are likely to have developed primarily under the stimulus of planning the year-long academic course (the first of its kind in a British university) on "Methods of Language Teaching" in the Department of Phonetics in the 1916-17 Session:

Annotated synopsis of Palmer, 1917 (*Scientific Study*)

(annotations refer to Palmer's previous known work in the area)

Part I: Introductory

Part II: *The Nature of Language* [cf. 1916a, Section 1]

Part III: *Preliminary Factors of Linguistic Pedagogy*

Part IV: *The Principles of Linguistic Pedagogy*
(*Fourfold aim of the student; Segregation; Active v. Passive Work; Semanticizing [i.e. the conveying of meanings]; Learning by Heart (primary vs. secondary matter)* [cf. 1916a, Section 3]; *Gradation; The Microcosm* [cf. research work described above]; *Subconscious Comprehension*)

Part V: An Ideal Standard Programme

Part VI: Special Programmes

Part VII: *The Functions of the Teacher* [cf. 1916a, Section 2]

Part VIII: The Student

Part IX: Conclusion

App. I: *Condensed and Abridged Scheme for a French Ergonic Chart*
(cf. 1916c and public lectures described above)

An anonymous review of this book in *Modern Language Teaching* (Anon., 1918) criticises its "scientific nomenclature," but recognises that it "marks a distinct advance in methods of language teaching." Subsequent judgement, indeed, has awarded the work classic status, as one of the first to (attempt to) establish a "science" of linguistic pedagogy on the basis of principles relating to language and language learning. As we

have seen, the writing of this book (which, as Howatt (1984: 237) has remarked, appears to have been written "in a sustained rush of inspiration," as if, indeed, it were a transcription of lectures actually given) coincided significantly with and is likely to have been greatly stimulated by the award to Palmer of a year-long course of academic lectures within the Department of Phonetics, U.C.L., on "Methods of Language Teaching," the first such course in a British university setting.

2. 1917-21 lectures at U.C.L.

Whereas Jones himself refers to all of Palmer's 1915-16 lectures as having been concerned with "methods of language teaching" (Jones, 1916?), the officially approved titles of the departmental lecture courses (referred to in Section 1 above) in the second and third terms of this Session were, respectively, "Modern Methods of Language Study" (UCMSM, 8 December, 1915) and "Methods of Language Study." (UCMSM, 8 March, 1916). Indeed, it is likely that Palmer himself — even at this early stage — suggested "Study" rather than "Teaching," since overall titles of his later lecture courses at U.C.L. (from the 1918-19 Session onwards) and at S.O.S. (from 1919-20) consistently refer not to "methods of language teaching" but to "theory of language study," "methods of language study" or "linguistics" (the latter two at S.O.S.). In this connection, it may also be relevant to note here a shift in emphasis during this period in the titles of Palmer's more theoretical publications: from "Some principles of language teaching" (1916), to *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917), to *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921) (emphases added). Changes in the titles and stated contents of Palmer's lecture courses at U.C.L. and (latterly) at the School of Oriental Studies (S.O.S) in the period 1917-21 also seem to reveal a gradual shift in focus away from teaching and towards language learning or "study" and general linguistics, as may be seen from the following presentation of course descriptions from University College

Abridged Calendars for the five Sessions between October, 1917 and September, 1922:

Palmer's U.C.L. Lectures: Oct. 1917-Sept. 1918

Methods of Language Teaching

S26. How to learn a Foreign Language.

First Term: Tuesday at 5.30.

S27. The Nature of Language.

First Term: Monday at 5.30.

S28. How to teach Languages in Schools.

Second Term: Tuesday at 5.30.

S29. Constructive Grammar. An outline of the general theory as applied to all languages.

Second Term: Monday at 5.30.

S30. How to teach English to Foreigners.

Third Term: Tuesday at 5.30.

(source: UCAC 7: 38)

In this (1917-18) Session, Palmer's one-year departmental course was expanded, with additional lectures being given on Mondays (in the first and second terms), as well as on Tuesdays (in all three terms, as in the previous Session). While Palmer's Tuesday classes (on "How to Learn a Foreign Language," "How to Teach Languages in Schools," and "How to Teach English to Foreigners") probably reflected priorities similar to those of the one-year "Methods of Language Teaching" course taught on the same day in the previous year (see Section 1 above), the additional Monday lectures on "The Nature of Language" and "Constructive Grammar [...] as applied to all languages" constituted a new departure for Palmer (and, indeed, the U.C.L. Department of Phonetics as a whole), into the area of general linguistics. In fact, Jones's notes for a lecture delivered to the Philological Society, London, on May 4th, 1917 (cited in

Collins, 1988: 230) indicate that Palmer's interests had already seemed to be taking a "general linguistic turn":

The subject of Sechuana grammar has been investigated in a masterly fashion by my colleague Mr. Palmer. I supplied him with the phonetic materials, and he applied to them his unique knowledge of general grammar. The result is that he has collected grammatical information of the highest interest and importance.

Additionally, in Jones's Departmental Report for the 1916-17 Session (Jones, 1917?), Palmer is said to have organised "a research class for investigating the mathematical theory of grammar [...] (which) led to interesting results." It might be speculated that the terms "constructive grammar" and "mathematical theory of grammar" in these reports relate to ergonic theory, and to the syntactic (or "mathematical") combination of ergons, as had begun to be described in *Scientific Study* (and Section 3 of Palmer, 1916a).

The only public lectures Palmer appears to have given in the 1917-18 Session were (five lectures) on "Scientific Methods of Language Study, and their Importance to the Empire" (RUCC 5: 38). Judging from the title, these lectures are likely to have been related to the propaganda effort for Jones's (ultimately doomed) plan for the establishment of an "Imperial" Institute of Phonetics (cf. Collins, 1988: 298-304, and UCPBM, 29 October, 1918). The title indicates in addition, however, Palmer's own preference for "Methods of Language Study" as opposed to "Methods of Language Teaching" in self-description of his interests at the time.

In the following (1918-19) Session, Palmer's U.C.L. lecture load was much reduced:

Palmer's U.C.L. Lectures: Oct. 1918-Sept. 1919

Theory of Language Study

Public Lectures will be given on:

- 1 . The Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages.
- 2 . The Nature of Language.
- 3 . Constructive Grammar.

For particulars see separate leaflets. (source: UCAC 8: 39)

Possible reasons why Palmer's academic courses "reverted" to being given in the form of public lectures in this (1918-19) and the following two (1919-20 and 1920-21) Sessions will be investigated in a future article. Here, we will simply note that, firstly, "Theory of Language Study" replaces "Methods of Language Teaching" as the overall title for the lecture series (and that this title is retained for all subsequent Sessions), and, secondly, two of the three proposed public lecture courses reflect the primarily "linguistic" concerns which seem to have first been formally expressed in Palmer's departmental lectures in the previous Session. In reality, though, while six public lectures are reported as having been given on "The Nature of Language," and an unstated number of lectures on "Methods of Language Study," no lectures appear to have been actually given on "Constructive Grammar." On the other hand, in 1918 Palmer gave four originally non-scheduled lectures on "The Problem of an International Language," and four more on "What Constitutes 'Correct' Speech?" (RUCC6: 28). As we shall see in Section 3 below, it was also during this Session that Palmer seems to have begun giving lectures on linguistics/methods of language study at S.O.S.

In the next (1919-20) Session, Palmer's lectures were still public rather than departmental:

Palmer's U.C.L. Lectures: Oct. 1919-Sept. 1920

Theory of Language Study

Public Lectures will be given by H.E. Palmer on: "Methods of

"Learning Foreign Languages." For particulars see separate leaflets.

(source: UCAC9: 42)

The sub-title provided for this scheduled 1919-20 public lecture series makes no reference to the teaching, but only to the *learning* of foreign languages. In fact, only four lectures appear to have been actually given (dealing, as scheduled, with "Methods of Learning Foreign Languages"), while four originally unscheduled lectures were additionally given, on "English Intonation" (RUCC 7: 42).

The 1920-21 Session saw no change in arrangements for Palmer's lectures (although there appears to have been a slight shift in emphasis from practice to theory in the stated course contents):

Palmer's U.C.L. Lectures: Oct. 1920-Sept. 1921

Theory of Language Study

Public Lectures will be given by H.E. Palmer on: "The Theory of Language Study." For particulars see separate leaflets.

(source: UCAC10: 43)

Surprisingly, Palmer is not reported (in either RUCC8 or RUCC9) as having actually given these, or any other public lectures in the 1920-21 Session (perhaps he was too busy writing his 1921 publications). Lectures in the subsequent (1921-22) Session were scheduled as follows:

Palmer's U.C.L. (and S.O.S.) Lectures: Oct. 1921-[Sept. 1922]

Theory of Language Study

S23. A Course of 10 Lectures on The Nature of Language.

First Term: Thursday at 5.30, beginning October 13th.

S24. A Course of 10 Lectures on How to Study a Foreign Language

without a Teacher.

Second Term: Wednesday at 5.30, beginning on January 18th.

Note. - Lectures on "Linguistics" as applied to the learning of Oriental Languages are given by Mr. Palmer at the School of Oriental Studies on Mondays at 4 o'clock. (source: UCAC 11: 45)

Thus, finally (for the Session during which he was invited to and left for Japan), Palmer's academic lectures were reinstated as departmental courses. He retained the overall title "Theory of Language Study" for these lectures, and intended to concentrate on a previously addressed general linguistic theme, "The Nature of Language," as well as the new —and, still today, strikingly modern-sounding topic of "learning without a teacher." Students who had intended to register for the latter course in fact did have to do without, however, since Palmer left for Japan at the beginning of 1922!

By the time of his departure, then, Palmer's focus in earlier lectures on the practice of language teaching (cf. Section 1 above) appears to have been overtaken by general linguistic considerations relating to "the nature of language" as well as by applied concerns in the area more specifically of language *learning*. The important shift of interest to the latter area, in particular, will be explored and explained further in the following section, which deals with Palmer's teaching over the same period (1917-21) at the School of Oriental Studies (S.O.S.), and the likely influence of this teaching on his 1921 publications.

3. Lectures at S.O.S (1918?-21) and 1921 publications

The U.C.L. course description last quoted above refers to Palmer's lectures at S.O.S, indicating clearly that these were on "linguistics" (as applied to the learning of Oriental Languages). All teaching of both phonetics and linguistics at S.O.S (which first began admitting students in January, 1917 (SOSR1: 3)) was, at this time, provided by staff from

Jones's U.C.L. Department of Phonetics (SOSR5: 6). Jones himself had started things off, giving a special course of six lectures on phonetics attended by S.O.S. teaching staff as well as students in the summer term of the very first (1916-17) Session of the new School (SOSR1: 6). For the 1917-18 Session, he was invited to give a year-long course of Saturday lectures on Phonetics, to be followed each time by a Practical Class (SOSP2: 19). Although Jones was timetabled to give the Practical Classes as well as the lectures (SOSP2: 27), it is possible that this task was handed over temporarily to Palmer, since he himself recorded in a later curriculum vitae (transcribed by Kuroda (1985: 81)) that he first started teaching at S.O.S. in 1917. Whether or not this was the case, it is clear that Lilius A. Armstrong, who appears to have first taken up teaching duties in the U.C.L. Department of Phonetics in February, 1918, had originally been intended for this role (Collins, 1988: 231), and is likely in fact to have begun to teach the Practical Classes in Phonetics at S.O.S. during this Session, perhaps replacing Palmer in this as in other areas.

However, the subsequent 1918-19 Session saw the initially unscheduled organisation of a "special course of Lectures in Linguistics, with a view to the particular needs of missionaries studying Oriental Languages," this course being taught by an unnamed member of the U.C.L. Department of Phonetics staff (SOSR3: 8). No-one in Jones's Department, not even Jones himself, seems to have shared Palmer's interests in the areas of general linguistics and methods of language study, and there is consequently no doubt that it was Palmer who was responsible for the teaching of this course of lectures, and — given their innovative nature — even, perhaps, for the suggestion that they should be arranged.²

Palmer had already begun to take an interest in the linguistic preparation of missionaries during the 1916-17 Session at U.C.L., planning a course for the Third Term which was described somewhat awkwardly as involving "methods of language teaching" but "specially adapted to the

needs of missionaries and other students of remote languages" (UCAC6: 38; cited above). What is actually being indicated here, it would seem, is a course on "methods of language study," that is (in modern parlance), a form of "learner training." In the following year (1917-18), as we have already seen in Section 2 above, this Third Term (Monday) course for missionaries was not originally scheduled at U.C.L.. Nevertheless, the course was in fact reinstated by force of "consumer" demand: at the March 5th, 1918 meeting of the College Committee (MUCC, 1917-18), approval was given to the proposal from a Dr. Steele, Secretary of the Board of Study for the Preparation of Missionaries that:

[...] in connection with the classes to be held under their [i.e. the Board's] auspices during the Summer Term [...] Mr. H.E. Palmer should be asked to give a Course of Five Lectures on "Methods of Language Study," intended specially for missionary students, at a fee of Five Shillings for the Course.

In the following, 1918-19 Session this course on "Methods of Language Study" was — it seems — simply transferred to S.O.S., being retitled a "special course of Lectures in Linguistics, with a view to the particular needs of missionaries studying Oriental Languages." This transfer to S.O.S. from U.C.L. of linguistic preparation for missionaries also seems to have involved phonetics, as is implied in the following S.O.S. report on the 1918-19 Session, the last sentence of which has already been cited above:

Lectures and practical classes in Phonetics have again been held throughout the Session, and owing to a special demand on the part of missionary students, an additional course was arranged in the Third Term. A special course of Lectures in Linguistics, with a view to the

² For Jones's lack of interest in (theoretical) linguistics, see Collins (1988: 396). By contrast, Palmer was one of the first British linguists to read de Saussure's *Cours de Linguistique Générale* (1916) in the original, to cite this work, and to recognize its importance (cf. Palmer, 1921a: 78).

particular needs of missionaries studying Oriental Languages at the School, was also arranged (SOSR3: 8).

In this 1918-19 Session, Palmer's "linguistics" course for missionaries, now held at S.O.S., still appears to have been of a provisional and demand-dependent nature, being originally unscheduled, just as in 1917-18 at U.C.L. In any case, Palmer was absent for the whole of the Third (Summer) Term of 1919, having been given leave to return to Verviers in Belgium for the first time since he and his family escaped in 1914 (MUCC, 1918-19, 4 March). However, with effect from the following (1919-20) Session, Palmer himself claims to have become "attached to the School of Oriental Studies (University of London) as lecturer on Methods of Language Study" (this in a hand-written (1922?) curriculum vitae, reproduced by Imura (1997: 55)). Palmer, like Jones, never in fact gained more than "Occasional Lecturer" status at S.O.S., nor was named in S.O.S. calendars or reports as a teacher there,³ but it is clear that for 1919-20 his (evidently popular) S.O.S. course on "linguistics"/"methods of language study" was formalised, perhaps being given a longer duration or at least repeated several times during the year, and opened up to non-missionary students; thus, the course was announced in advance for the first time in the S.O.S. Prospectus (following description of phonetics courses), as follows: "Special Courses in Linguistics are also given during the Session by arrangement with University College" (SOSPr. 4: 22). This is also the first Session for which the number of students attending linguistics courses is reported, although the total is a combined one for "Phonetics and Linguistics" (SOSR4: 6). Indeed, the following presentation of numbers of students attending courses in the

³ For example, neither Palmer nor Jones is listed by name in the S.O.S. Report for 1920-21 (SOSR5: 4), which mentions that apart from the 27 Lecturers on the permanent staff (who are listed), "Instruction has also been provided by twenty-six Occasional Lecturers" (SOSR5: 6).

various subjects on offer at S.O.S. over its first few years of existence clearly indicates the growing popularity and establishment not only of phonetics but also, latterly, of Palmer's course on linguistics/methods of language study:

Numbers of students registered for courses at S.O.S. (1917-22)

(Only totals for the most popular six subjects in each Session are given)

1917-18 (Third Term only)	1918-19 (Third Term only)	1919-20
26 Arabic	67 Arabic	122 Phonetics/ Linguistics
19 Phonetics	47 Phonetics	106 Arabic
19 Turkish	26 Hindustani	100 Hindustani
16 Chinese	26 Japanese	46 Mandarin
10 Hindustani	20 Chinese	30 Japanese
10 Sanskrit	15 Turkish	29 Swahili
(SOSR2: 5-6)	(SOSR3: 4-5)	(SOSR4: 6)
1920-21	1921-22	
100 Phonetics	107 Phonetics	
64 Arabic	85 Arabic	
59 Linguistics	53 Chinese	
55 Urdu	53 Urdu	
40 Chinese (Mandarin)	45 Linguistics	
30 Persian	35 Japanese	
(SOSR5: 8-9)	(SOSR6: 7-8)	

It may be seen, then, that from its relatively humble beginnings at U.C.L. as a short, practical course in methods of language study for prospective missionaries (in the Third Term of the 1916-17 Session), Palmer's course had become by the 1920-21 Session one of the three most

popular subjects for students (by this time not exclusively or even mainly missionaries) starting out on or engaged in the study of Oriental languages at S.O.S. A further instance of official recognition for Palmer's contribution to language studies at S.O.S. came on June 28th, 1921, when the College Committee of U.C.L. (still Palmer's principal employer) discussed a request from S.O.S. for the teaching of linguistics as well as phonetics to be placed on a more permanent basis (MUCC, 1920-21). Palmer was awarded a regular termly salary supplement for what was called his "Elementary course in linguistics (1 hour lecture)," while Jones was awarded a similar fixed supplement to his U.C.L. salary for his S.O.S. phonetics teaching (ibid.). Between 1918 and 1921 — apparently a rather fallow period for Palmer in terms of academic lectures at U.C.L. since only public lectures were given, as we have seen in Section 2 above — he appears to have carved out a niche for himself at the newly-established S.O.S., tailoring his contributions to an entirely different type of audience from the practising modern language teachers who had attended his first U.C.L. lectures. Rather than being teachers, his S.O.S. audience was one of prospective missionaries and latterly other students of so-called "remote" languages.

In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Palmer should have emphasised more and more strongly methods of language *study* as opposed to *teaching*, even in his public U.C.L. lectures (cf. Section 2 above), nor, indeed, that this shift of emphasis should be reflected in his later London publications. This shift was not, of course, absolute: as we have seen, the nature of language learning is addressed to some extent in *Scientific Study* (indeed, the fact that this background area *is* addressed (e.g. in Part IV, Sections 16 and 18), along with (more extensive) consideration of the nature of language itself (Part II) is what legitimates to a large extent Palmer's claim in that work to be considering language teaching on a "scientific" or "principled" basis.⁴ In addition, one of Palmer's 1921 publications, *The Oral Method of Teaching Languages*

(1921b), is very clearly concerned with particular language *teaching* practices. The same year, however, saw publication of his most “thought-through, distilled, and authoritative” (Howatt, 1984: 237) applied linguistic statement, *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a) which — aside from not referring at all to teaching in its title — very clearly lays a greater emphasis on the nature of language learning and devotes less space to specific practical suggestions for teachers and to considerations relating to the nature of language than does *Scientific Study* (1917). Indeed, on the basis of our discussion of Palmer’s “learner training” work at S.O.S. above, it seems possible to read the first five Parts of *Principles* quite literally as a target language-neutral treatise on how readers might themselves consider learning (not simply preparing to teach) a foreign language.

As may be seen from the synopsis below, then, *Principles* focuses the reader’s attention at the outset on the nature of language *learning*, whereas *Scientific Study* had started off with an overview of “The Nature of Language.” Indeed, it is perhaps surprising (considering the apparent deepening of Palmer’s general linguistic interests over the period, as revealed in Section 2), that discussion of “The Nature of Language” is so absent generally from this later work. In the synopsis of *Principles* below, a division is indicated between the first third (Parts I to V) and the latter two-thirds (Parts VI to XVI) which is not in fact signalled explicitly by Palmer himself. Viewing the book in this manner, however, enables us to see clearly that, whereas discussion of nine (or

⁴ In Part I of *Scientific Study*, Palmer indicates the likely importance of insights from philologists, phonetics, grammarians, lexicologists, modern pedagogy, and psychologists before going on to claim: “Our new science [of language-study] will consist of a compilation of facts culled from these several domains, but placed in such order and with such observance of proportion that the inevitable conclusions will suggest themselves” (Palmer, 1917: 22).

ten) principles of language *teaching* is in fact central to the latter two-thirds of the book (comprising in this respect an expansion and refinement of Part IV of *Scientific Study*), this discussion is preceded by a somewhat free-standing, largely novel and highly forward-looking “section” addressing (to use modern terminology) second language acquisition, self-directed language learning, and the need for learner training. As we have suggested, these concerns are likely to have presented themselves with force to Palmer largely as a consequence of his lecturing to language students at U.C.L. and, more particularly, S.O.S., in the years following publication of *Scientific Study*.

Annotated synopsis of Palmer, 1921a (*Principles*)

(Chapters which emphasise language learning as much as/more than teaching are asterisked; Chapters which appear to have a corresponding Part in *Scientific Study* (1917) are italicised)

*Chapter I: *Our Spontaneous Capacities for acquiring Speech* (cf. 1917, Part IV: Active v. Passive Work; Subconscious Comprehension)

*Chapter II: *Our Studial Capacities and how to use them*

*Chapter III: *Why we must use our Studial Capacities*

*Chapter IV: *The Student and his Aim* (cf. 1917, Part III: Preliminary Factors)

*Chapter V: *The Supreme Importance of the Elementary Stage*

Chapter VI: *The Principles of Language-teaching* (cf. 1917, Part I: Introductory)

*Chapter VII: *Initial Preparation* (=1st principle)

*Chapter VIII: *Habit-forming and Habit-adapting* (=2nd principle)

*Chapter IX: *Accuracy* (=3rd principle)

Chapter X: *Gradation* (=4th principle) (cf. 1917, Part IV: Gradation/The microcosm)

- Chapter XI: *Proportion* (=5th principle) (cf. 1917, Part IV: Fourfold aim/Ségregation)
- Chapter XII: *Concreteness* (=6th principle) (cf. 1917, Part IV: Semanticizing)
- Chapter XIII: *Interest* (=7th principle)
- Chapter XIV: *A Rational Order of Progression* (=8th principle)
- Chapter XV: *The Multiple Line of Approach* (=9th principle)
- *Chapter XVI: *'Memorized Matter' and 'Constructed Matter'* (=potentially, a 10th principle) (cf. 1917, Part IV: Learning by heart)

Conclusion

Palmer's work in London from 1915 to 1921 may be seen to have constituted in many ways the birth of an applied linguistic (systematic, principled) approach to discussion of second language pedagogy. In particular, Palmer's innovative attempt in *The Principles of Language-Study* (1921a) to link linguistic pedagogy to language learning theory anticipated present-day research into second language acquisition, with a greater emphasis, however, on the *relationship* between background research and practice than is often in evidence today. His previous (and complementary) attempt in *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages* (1917) to ground language teaching theory in discussion of "The Nature of Language" may also be seen to have prefigured post-war applied linguistics in the more literal sense of the term, with the difference being that Palmer was — to a large extent — inventing his own lexicological and ergonomic linguistics to apply! Palmer's previous and ongoing personal experience of teaching and learning languages appears to have combined with original theory and background research to particularly productive effect during his London years. What may be termed an "academic" ability to systematically theorise his experience appears to have emerged over the period, while Palmer appears also to have culti-

vated new interests — particularly in the areas of general linguistics and the psychology of language learning. In this article we have been concerned not only to show how these developments were related to his academic lectures, but also to suggest that the stimulus of preparing these lectures may in itself have enhanced his overall growth in stature as a language teaching theorist.

In future work, we hope to present more findings and analyses relating to Palmer's London years, in particular to his classes and publications in the areas of phonetics and (the teaching of) spoken English, his contacts with the modern language teaching world, the development of his occupational status, and the motivations underlying his acceptance of the invitation to Japan. We also hope to investigate in detail the further development *in* Japan of Palmer's unique applied linguistic approach to the practice of language teaching.

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