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Discovering Bents

If I go back with memory, the first person my mind recalls is my **middle school English teacher**. I keep a vague memory of her. To tell the truth I cannot even remember her face, rather it is a shape that crosses my mind and, yet, I feel she was important for my later choices: she probably fostered motivation to study English.

I also remember the front cover of my **text book**, not to mention its first pages: the big coloured pictures of two children with large descriptive captions in the middle of the page. It feels I can still see those pages.

Certainly middle school motivation provides an explanation for my further secondary school choices when I decided to attend a school where the study of foreign language was a privileged area of learning.

Again it is the memory of two language teachers more than anything else there that comes back; significantly they were the **English** and the **German teachers**, both excellent professionals, even if very different and complex personalities.

Though very young, they were fond of their job and, according to some, very demanding. I did not agree with them. I always enjoyed their lessons and - to be honest - much more than any other lesson.

Of course German was harder than English and, for plenty of reasons, to me it still is. At the same time I liked German and its strict grammar and syntax and, last but not least, German lexis and vocabulary. During the third year, the German teacher also expected students to read some literature in German and, if I am not mistaken, I read *Der Richter und sein Henker* by Dürrenmatt and something about Peter Weiss and I still like the idea of it.

As for English, the method was completely different; focus was more on speaking there and I do remember the drilling and the listening comprehension practice followed by summary writing, a task my present students seem to find difficult indeed.

Later came Business English and Handels Korrespondenz.

Microlanguage learning and writing did not seem so complex to me and I enjoyed the challenges of letter writing as it unsolicited offers, complaints, execution of orders and the like.