

► **Chapter 4**

➤ **Constituents and Categories of Methods**

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In part one, we discussed about the fundamental features of language, language learning and language teaching or critiquing any coherent and comprehensive L2 pedagogy.

4.1. Constituents of language teaching methods

A variety of labels such as approach, design, methods, practices, principles, procedures, strategies, tactics, techniques, and so on are used to describe various elements constituting language teaching.

A plethora of terms and labels can hardly facilitate a meaningful and informed discussion in any area of professional activity.

4.1.1. Method and methodology

Method is central to any language teaching enterprise. Many of us in the language teaching profession use the term, method, so much and so often that we seldom recognize its problematic nature.

We use the term method to refer to two different elements of language teaching, method as proposed by theories and methods as practiced by teachers.

What the teachers actually do in the classroom is different from what is advocated by the theorists.

The distinction between method and methodology

Method refers to establish methods conceptualized and constructed by experts in the field.

Methodology refers to what practicing teachers actually do in the classroom in order to achieve their stated or unstated teaching objectives.

Mackey (1965) differentiated what he called method analysis from teaching analysis :

Any meaning of method must first distinguish between what a teacher teaches and what a book teaches.

Method analysis is one thing, teaching analysis quite another. Method analysis determines how teaching is done by the book, **teaching analysis** shows how much is done by teacher.

Teaching analysis can be done only by analyzing and interpreting authentic classroom data that include the methodological practices of the teacher as revealed through classroom input and interaction.

A method analysis, on the other hand, can be carried out by merely analyzing and interpreting different

constituent features of a method presented in standard textbooks on language teaching methods using any appropriate analytical framework.

4.1.2. Approach , Method , and Teaching

Antony (1963) proposed a three-way distinction:

- Approach
- Method
- Technique

Approach : As a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. It states a point of view , a philosophy , an article of faith. Thus , an approach embodies the theoretical principles governing language learning and language teaching.

A method : it is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material.no part of which contradicts, and al, of which is based upon, selected approach.

An approach is axiomatic , **a method** is procedural. Within one approach there can be many methods. Methods are implemented in the classroom through what are called techniques.

A technique is defined as a particular trick stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective.

The tripartite framework is hierarchical in the sense that approach informs method and method informs techniques.

4.1,3. Approach , Design and Procedure

To rectify some of the limitations of the Antony framework , Richards and Rodgers (1982) attempted to revise and refine it. They proposed a system that is broader in its scope and wider in its implications. Like Antony , they too made a three -part distinction- approach , design , and procedure.

Approach : defines those assumptions , beliefs , and theories about the nature of language and the nature of language learning which operated as axiomatic constructs or reference points and provide a theoretical foundation for what language teachers ultimately do with learners in classrooms.

Design : specifies the relationship of theories of languages and learning to both the form and function of instructional materials and activities in instructional settings.

Procedure : it comprises the classroom techniques and practices which are consequences of particular approaches and designs.

Why not using methods ?

Notice that the term , method , does not figure in this hierarchy . That is because Richards and Rodgers preferred to use it as an umbrella term to refer to the broader relationship between theory and practice in language teaching.

Richards and Rodgers retained the term , approach to mean what it means in the Antony framework, that is , to refer primarily to the theoretical axioms governing language, language learning and language

teaching.

They introduced new term , design , however , is broader than Antony's method as it includes specifications of the content of instruction , that is the syllabus , learner roles , teacher roles and instruction materials and their types and functions.

Procedure , like technique in the Antony framework , refers to the actual moment -to-moment classroom activity.

It includes a specification of context of use and a description of precisely what is expected in terms of execution and outcome for each exercise.

Procedure is concerned with issues such as :

- The types of teaching and learning techniques
- The types of exercises and practice activities
- The resources-time
- Space
- Equipment
- Required to implement recommended activities

While defining design , they state that design considerations deal with assumptions about the content and the context for teaching and learning.

4.1.4. Principles and Procedures

The first of the triad-approach- refers to theoretical principles governing language learning and teaching. These principles are generally drawn from a number of disciplines: linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, information sciences, conversational analysis, discourse analysis and so forth.

The second part of the triad-method or design can be part of the first component because we can by all means think of principles of syllabus design, principles of materials production, principles of evaluation, and so forth.

The third component , of course , refers to actual classroom -teaching strategies , in other words , two major components of any systematic /learning /teaching operation are the principles that shape our concepts and convictions, and the procedures that help us translate those principles into a workable plan in a specific classroom context.

We distinguish a two part : principles and procedures :

The term principles may be operationally defined as a set of insights derived from theoretical and applied linguistics,

cognitive psychology, information science and principles that provide theoretical basis for the study of language learning , language planning and language teaching.

The term thus includes not only the theoretical assumptions governing language learning and teaching but also those governing syllabus design, material production and evaluation measures.

Procedures may be operationally defined as a set of teaching strategies adopted by the teacher in order to accomplish the stated and unstated , short and long term goals of language learning and teaching in classroom.

Classroom events , activities or techniques can be covered under procedures.

4.2. Categories of language teaching methods

Another source of tiresome ambiguity that afflicts language teaching is the absence of a principled way to categorize language teaching methods in a conceptually coherent fashion.

- a) Language -centered methods
- b) Learner -centered methods
- c) Learning -centered methods

4.2.1. Language - centered method

Language centered methods are those that are principally concerned with linguistic forms. These methods (such as Audio lingual method) seek to provide opportunities for learners to practice preselected , linguistic structures through form-focused exercises in class.

According to this view , language development is more intentional than incidental. That is learners are expected to pay continual and conscious attention to linguistic features through systematic planning and sustained practice in order to learn and to use them.

Language centered pedagogists treat language learning as a linear , additive process. In other words, they believe that language develops primarily in terms of what Rutherford (1987) called accumulated entities. That is a set of grammatical structures and vocabulary items are carefully selected for their usability and graded for their difficulty.

4.2.2. Learner -Centered Methods

Learner-centered methods are those that are principally concerned with learners needs, wants and situations. These methods (such as communicative language teaching) seek to provide opportunities for learners to practice preselected , presequenced linguistic structures and communicative notions /functions through meaning focused activities. A pre occupation with form and function will ultimately lead to target language mastery and the learners can use both formal and functional to fulfill their communicative needs outside the class.

Learner-centered pedagogists aim at making language learners grammatically accurate and communicatively fluent. They keep in mind the learner's real life language use in social interaction or for academic study.

Learner -centered methods remain , basically linear and additive.

Some believe that is in a accumulated entities. The one major different is that in the case of learner-centered methods ,

They represent structures plus notions and functions.

4.2.3. Learning -Centered Methods

Learning -centered methods are those that are principally concerned with cognitive processes of language learning.

These methods such as the Natural Approach seek to provide opportunities for learners to participate in

open-ended meaningful interaction through problem solving tasks in class, assuming that a preoccupation with meaning-making will lead to target language mastery and that learners can deploy the still developing interlanguage to achieve linguistic as well as pragmatic knowledge /ability.

According to learning-centered pedagogists, language development is a nonlinear process, and therefore, does not require preselected, presequenced systematic language input, but requires the creation of conditions in which learners engage in meaning full activities in class.

4.3. Designer Non-Methods

Part of the method that Stern talked about has given us what are called new methods. They include community language learning, the Silent way, Suggestopedia, and Total physical response.

All these new methods advocate a humanistic approach to language learning and teaching.

Community language learning treats teachers as language counselors who are sensitive to the language learners, emotional struggle to cope with the challenges of language learning.

Using color charts and color as props, teachers are expected to encourage learners to express their thoughts, perceptions, and feelings, and in the process, learning the language, Suggestopedia, which now had a fancier name, Desuggestopedia, aims at removing psychological barriers to learning through the psychological notion of suggestion.

4.4. A special Task

A task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed,