

*POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA
IN
THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH*

**PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE
TEACHING**



**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
UNIVERSITY**

**HYDERABAD – 500 605
INDIA**

POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

**PRINCIPLES OF
LANGUAGE TEACHING**

I

**METHODS AND APPROACHES IN
LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
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Principles of Language Teaching

Block I Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching

Block II Psychology of Language Teaching

Block III Classroom Interaction

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Principles of Language Teaching (PLT) gives you deeper theoretical orientations to basic concepts in ELT. It seeks to theorise on practice, giving an introduction to core areas in the field. PLT can be seen as a first step to research in English Language Education.

PLT starts with an introduction to different methods in language teaching (Block I). Block I is written around Diane Larsen Freeman's **Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching**. This is followed by a presentation of what is involved in basic schools of psychology for language learning and teaching (Block II).

Block III aims to give you an understanding of classroom interaction, the goal being to introduce you to the nature and types of interaction modes in the language classroom.

Principles of Language Teaching

Block I

Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching

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INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK I

This is the first block in your **Principles in Language Teaching** course. The aims of this block are:

1. to give an insight into current methodological practices within tertiary educational institutions where English is taught as a “second” language or a “foreign” language;
2. to update you on some methodological issues in question, and
3. to give some background to the development in educational technology, which requires the development of new methodological approaches.

It is not the objective of this block to offer advice on “teaching practice” which we had done in PGCTE. My brief in writing this block is therefore, to give insight into some of the theoretical aspects of methodology.

When you have completed this block, you should :

- a) be able to define what is and what is not a language teaching method;
- b) have crystallized your own opinion on the current status of CLT in language teaching;
- c) be informed of the rationale underlying learner independence and learner training; and
- d) understand the new developments in educational technology.

In Unit 1, we start by giving you a brief history of Methods, after clarifying the terms *methods*, *approaches* and *techniques*. In Unit 2, we familiarize you with a number of pedagogical theories and with *Communicative Language Teaching*. Unit 3 will introduce you to *Content-based*, *Task-based*, and *Participatory Approaches*. Finally, Unit 4 will take you to *Learning Strategy Training*, *Cooperative Learning*, and *Multiple Intelligences*.

This unit is to be read and worked through with the text supplied to you by Diane Larsen-Freeman (2004), **Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching**, OUP.

Unit 1

Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice

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Unit 1

Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice

1.0 Introduction

We begin this block with a discussion of what constitutes a method. As you know, Block I is written around the accompanying book by Diane Larsen Freeman, **Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching**. You will need to read the book thoroughly from the Introduction to the last chapter. This unit will discuss what the term **method** means in the ELT literature. We feel this is necessary to help you read the book with understanding. To quote Larsen Freeman, the book is designed to enable you to learn about many different language teaching methods, and to introduce you to a variety of techniques. The goal is to help you uncover the thoughts that guide your own actions as a teacher.

1.1 What is a method?

In this section we look at some definitions of the term **method** and then look at the underlying questions that prompted these definitions.

We will first look at a definition by Anthony (1963) then Dubin and Olshtain (1986) followed by Widdowson (1990) and conclude with Larsen-Freeman (2004). You will notice that the definitions are given in chronological order, the aim being to show you the evolution of the term. We conclude this section with the points listed by Richards and Rodgers (2002) about the questions and issues underlying different approaches and methods.

Definition 1

A language teaching method is a scheme describing firstly the **roles** of the **participants** in an instructional context, and secondly, the **role** and **form** of the **instructional materials**. The assumptions upon which such a description is based are derived from theories of what constitutes language and/or how language learning takes place. Ultimately, the method is put into practice in the classroom by teachers who, through internalizing the principles inherent in a particular method, develop their own procedures and techniques parallel to those prescribed by the method. By this process, methods become established pedagogy.

This definition is loosely based on the standard tripartite description of a "method", which has been passed down from generation to generation from Edward Anthony's 1963 definition. Anthony, an American Applied Linguist, identified three levels of conceptualization and organization: **Approach, method and technique**. He envisaged a hierarchical relationship between the three:

The arrangement is hierarchical. The organizational key is that **techniques** carry out a **method** which is consistent with an **approach**

(Anthony 1963: 63)

Briefly put, according to Anthony, **approach** corresponds to a correlative set of assumptions about language learning and the nature of language itself. **Method** is the level at which a plan is made for the presentation of instructional materials in line with the selected approach. Finally, **technique** is the level of implementation at which classroom procedures are prescribed. Anthony's definition remains to this day seminal, echoed with bare modification in more recent definitions of method.

Definition 2

Recent methods seem to have exploded in all directions, to such an extent that the term name methods, like name brands, can be used to describe them. Everything is called a method whether or not it fits Anthony's definition. One element these methods have in common is that they tend to be concerned with partial segments of the whole spectrum. Some are strongly found on one aspect of the basis for a curriculum; namely the nature of the language learner; others are grounded in particular educational philosophies ... so, for example, methods such as **The Silent Way**, **Total Physical Response** and **The Natural Approach** are all based on hypotheses about psychological aspects of language learning. Others, notably **Community Language Learning**, are concerned with particular philosophies of education. (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986)

Definition 3

Now it seems reasonable to suggest that the competence/performance distinction might also mark the division of responsibility between syllabus and methodology, with the former specifying the knowledge to be acquired and the latter providing conditions for its behavioural realization. One might have expected, therefore, that this issue about the nature and scope of linguistic description would have been interpreted as a derived issue, so to speak, in respect of syllabus design and methodology. Over recent years there has been a growing realization that the development of **Communicative Competence** is crucially a methodological matter, but we also need a rationale in support of such a shift in focus. (Widdowson, 1990)

Definition 4

I will use the term 'language teaching method' to mean a **coherent set of links between actions and thoughts** in language teaching. The **actions** are the **techniques** and the **thoughts** are the **principles**...

First of all, a method is seen as superordinate comprising both "principles" and "techniques". The principles involve five aspects of second or foreign language learning: the teacher, the learner, the learning process and the target language / culture. Taken together the principles represent the theoretical framework of the method. The techniques are the behavioral manifestations of the principles - in other words, the classroom activities and procedures derived from the application of the principles. (Larsen-Freeman, 2004)

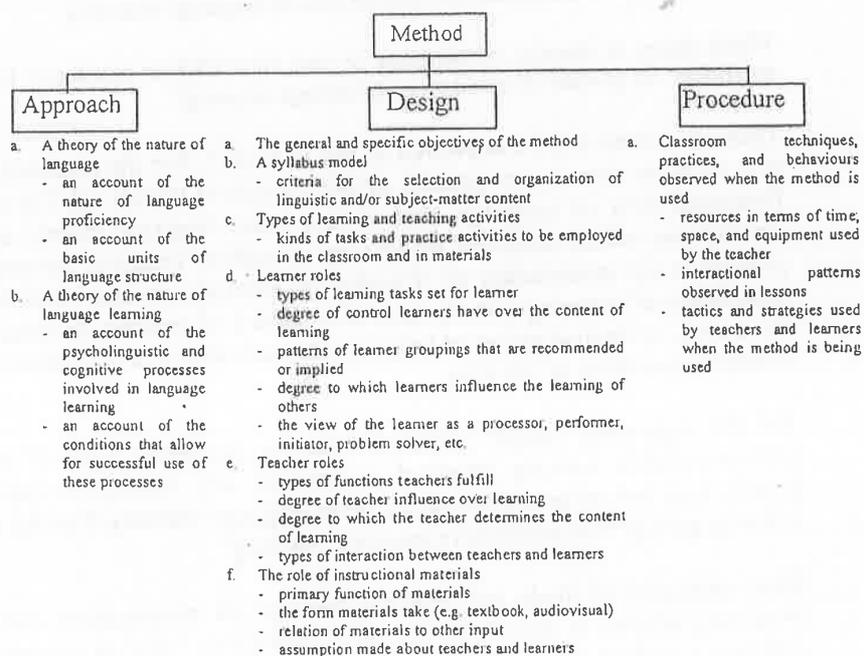
Some of the questions that prompted innovations and new directions in language teaching in the past are given below:

1. What should the goals of language teaching be? Should a language course try to teach conversational proficiency, reading, translation or some other skill?
2. What is the basic nature of language and how will this affect teaching method?
3. What are the principles for the selection of language content in language teaching?
4. What principles of organization, sequencing and presentation best facilitate learning?
5. What should the role of the nature of language be?
6. What processes do learners use in mastering a language and can these be incorporated into method?
7. What teaching techniques and activities work best and under what circumstances?

Particular methods differ in the way they address these issues (Richards and Rodgers, 2002)

If you compare all these definitions keeping in mind the points listed by Richards and Rodgers, you will discover that the latter have made highly instructive and valuable modifications to Anthony's definition. Their primary objection to Anthony's model is the lack of specifications of nature of 'method' itself; the intermediary stage between theory and practice. In Richards and Rodgers revised model (2002) method is renamed 'Design' and consists of (inter alia) syllabus design and detailed specifications of the roles of the instructional materials, the learner and the teacher. Anthony's 'technique' is renamed 'Procedure'.

A full summary of this model is given in the Figure below:



1.2 Theories which affect method

Approach is therefore the level at which method draws on linguistic and language learning theories. At present there are three different theories of the nature of language which inform language teaching methods:

(a) The Structural view/approach

Language is a system of structurally related elements which encode meaning.

(b) The Functional view

Language is a vehicle for expressing functional meaning.

(c) The Interactional view.

Language is a vehicle for the establishment and realisation of interpersonal relationships the study of which involves analysis of speech acts and patterns of verbal behaviour or moves.

It is not a prescribed method but an attitude to language teaching. The other aspect of approach is of course language learning theory, that is theories about the cognitive and psychological processes involved in language learning and about the conditions which should be met before learning can take place. These theories can be roughly grouped into two broad categories; those oriented towards learning processes (including hypothesis-testing, habit-formation, inductive or deductive learning) and those theories oriented towards the identification of appropriate contexts for language learning.

An example of a teaching method derived primarily from language learning theory (as opposed to language theory) is Terrel's **Natural Approach**. The method is based on Krashen's **Monitor Theory** of language acquisition. The **Monitor Theory** addresses both the process and condition dimensions of language learning.

Which theory or theories of language do you think CLT is based on? Is CLT based on a condition? Or process-oriented view of language learning?

These questions will be answered in full in Unit 2. For the moment, I would like to give no more than a very general answer - a rule of thumb. CLT is based more on a functional view of language, than on any other language theory, and incorporates assumptions which combine process and condition oriented learning theories. The preference for presentation of 'Chunks' of authentic material and the emphasis on negotiation of meaning can be seen as evidence of process oriented theory. At the same time, contextualisation of language use and behaviour is seen as a necessary pre-condition condition of learning.

Yet the apparently natural affinity-between a functional view of language and a process-oriented learning approach is not the only linking conceivable. We can equally well link structuralism to the same language learning theories on which CLT is based, giving "communicative grammar teaching".

Other examples of likely and unlikely pairings are structuralism and behaviourism (Audiolingualism) or structuralism and a mentalistic view of language learning in Gattegno's method, The Silent Way.

Activity – A

Look at the list of methods below. Can you identify the types of learning theory these methods are associated with?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. Community Language Learning | e. Suggestopedia |
| b. Audiolingualism | f. Total Immersion |
| c. Total Physical Response | g. Project Learning |
| d. Grammar-Translation Method | h. Language through Curriculum |

Discussion

a) Community Language Learning

Community Language Learning is a branch of Counselling learning theory which is a "holistic" learning approach based on principles of psycho-analysis and counselling. Developed by Charles A Curran, Professor in Psychology at Loyola University, Chicago, CLL emphasises the importance of the relationship between tutor and learner(s). The tutor should see the world as the participant does. Learning should take place in an atmosphere of warmth and security in which both instructor and learners are involved in an interaction.

Learning progresses through five stages from total (babylike) dependence on the part of the learners to increasing independence through the processes of hypothesis testing, retention and reflection and thereby developing the ability to make relationships between the disparate items of input realised.

b) Audiolingualism

Audiolingualism is based on Behaviourist Psychology. The following assumptions are implicit:

- Language learning is primarily mechanical habit formation.
- Language is a form of verbal behaviour.
- Language skills are learnt more effectively if language input is presented in spoken form before it is seen in written form.
- Analogy is a better foundation for language learning than analysis, therefore pattern practice in context precedes the presentation of rules.
- Teaching language involves teaching the cultural norms of native speakers of the target language.

(c) Total Physical Response

TPR is built around the co-ordination of speech and action. The method was developed by Professor James Asher, (Psychology) San Jose University, California, and is based on three learning hypotheses, which have become influential.

- (1) There exists an innate bio-programme for language learning which defines an optimal path for first and second language acquisition processes.
- (2) Lateralisation of the brain affects learning functions in the left and right brain hemispheres. TPR is right-hemisphere learning; motor movement and subsequent analysis.
- (3) Stress (an affective factor) intervenes between the act of learning and what is to be learnt. Motion should reduce stress levels as does actually enjoying the lesson.

(d) Grammar-translation method

The Direct translation method derives from a belief in structural analysis and the principles of Comparative linguistics. By comparing the first and second languages, noting similarities and differences between the two, and thus forming hypotheses about the structure of the FL second language acquisition takes place.

(e) Suggestopedia

This is Lazaanov's theory. At the heart of Suggestopedia is the power of suggestion but Lazaanov claims his views separate Suggestopedia from hypnosis. Lazaanov claims his method not only loads the memory bank with desired and facilitating memories but also includes desuggestion, or removing blocking or undesirable memories.

Key to the method are the assumptions that people learn most effectively and are most influenced by information coming from an authoritative source, that learners learn from both direct instruction and from the environment in which instruction takes place and that emotional or connotative links are aids to learning.

(f) Total Immersion Programmes and Language through Curriculum

Total Immersion models second language acquisition as closely as possible on first language acquisition.

(g) Project learning

Project learning, like the two methods mentioned in (f) and (h) stem from communicative methodologies - the focus is on the message in preference to the form. Fluency and comprehensibility are uppermost. Project learning provides the motivation for communicative acts and allows for individualisation of learning. The project approach is also founded in a general educational theory; Discovery learning.

(h) Language Through Curriculum

Language through Curriculum is based on the notion (an assumption also core to the communicative approach) that focus on the message, provided that sufficient motivation exists to decode and encode messages in the FL, aids and promotes language acquisition.

syllabus design whereas others are designed in such a way that the syllabus can only be retrospective.

Take as an example of a method with a highly prescriptive, prospective syllabus **Suggestopedia and Community Language Learning** as a good example of retrospective syllabus design.

There are also cases of highly prescriptive methods, such as **The Silent Way** which is highly prescriptive on points (c) to (f) inclusive, which lack detail in syllabus design selection, sequencing and structure. As language is not taught in a vacuum, inevitably the syllabus must be designed by interference or by taking a pre-existing syllabus and matching its compatibility to the method.

Which takes precedence then - the syllabus or the method? The satisfactory conclusion would be that a syllabus should not predetermine the method chosen to realise a particular set of teaching objectives. In a world where methods were fully prescribed and detailed and practised as designed, then the practitioner could select a method (with syllabus incorporated) to suit the learning context in hand. Unfortunately, the world of language teaching has become one of woolly eclecticism and it is so more than probable that in practice syllabus design usually precedes considerations of method in course-design and planning.

1.4 The participants and the Instructional Materials

Different instructional systems (methods) vary according to how learning is seen to take place effectively and in their notions of the learner's contribution to the learning process.

Some of the dimensions to be considered include:

- (a) the type of activities the learners carry out;
- (b) the degree of control the learners have over the content of learning;
- (c) the patterns of learner groupings in performing learning tasks: pair, individual, group, homogeneous vs. mixed competence levels;
- (d) the degree to which learning is co-operative (including peer teaching and peer correction) or individual; and
- (e) the 'cognitive' and attitudinal approaches the learner is encouraged to adopt with respect to the learning task: analytic, alert and attentive, relaxed, focused on message/content rather than language

Inevitably, at least in my opinion, if a method determines the role of the learner then the role and function of the teacher-instructor will follow from this.

To begin with a fairly crude example, **Audiolingualism**, based on behaviourist

learning theory, has been severely criticised by succeeding generations for its limited view of the learner and the primacy of instructional materials. The method implies learners are stimulus-response mechanisms, who through continual repetition will develop 'appropriate linguistic behaviour'. The instructor is by definition the expert, the judge and evaluator of performance, the giver of rewards and approbation. This is a highly authoritative role and one which would be difficult to maintain in the social climate of today. Consider also Lazanov's **Suggestopedia**. Lazanov's descriptions of the method, which is based upon principles of Soviet psychology (originating from an entirely different philosophical basis than Western psychological traditions), define the learner's role as receptive and the cognitive/psychological mood as 'pseudo-passive'.

To clarify this point it is necessary to give a brief description of the features of the method relevant to this discussion. For further details please refer to Stevick (1976) or Richards & Rodgers (1986).

The teacher is the key player in **Suggestopedia**. Lazanov states categorically that the teacher should be a figure of quiet and dignified authority, in manner, demeanour and dress, whose control of the learning situation is absolute. The learners must have absolute trust in the instructor and confidence in his/her expertise, discretion and authority. Over and above the ability to create this solemn ambience the Suggestopedia instructor requires specific skills in drama, voice control, music, personal counselling skills and absolute faith in the efficacy of the method. Lazanov advocates completion of an extensive training course (months rather than weeks) before instructors embark on the method with classes of learners.

The teacher's aim is to create a mood of suggestability in the learners and this is largely achieved by his/her manner and role and partly by such environmental factors as soft lighting, comfortable chairs and the use of music. A Suggestopedia course lasts thirty days and consists of ten units of study. The central focus of each unit is a dialogue of around 1,200 words with an accompanying vocabulary list and grammatical commentary.

The pattern and sequencing of the units are fixed, but the materials themselves, which must be of literary quality and have emotional force, are not crucial to the method. What is crucial is the non-threatening environment where all distasteful or disturbing aspects of human life are banned.

The learner's role is also defined explicitly. The learner enrolls for the course voluntarily but once enrolled is expected to show full commitment, by avoiding mind-altering substances like tobacco or alcohol during sessions and by allowing and contributing to the process of 'infantilization'.

Few methods outline the participants' roles as explicitly as Suggestopedia. Moreover, the view of the instructor as a figure of authority is currently out of vogue and has been widely replaced nowadays by a view of the teacher as a 'facilitator' of learning.

The teacher as facilitator is a role which has its origins in cognitive learning theories which promote learner independence. There is no single named method which can be cited as the quintessential example of the learner-independence trend, but this approach

to learning includes assumptions about the knock-on effects of taking responsibility for one's learning through selecting the content of one's learning programme, self-assessment, taking initiatives to find learning opportunities and being self-reliant. Unit 4 deals exclusively with learner independence and the principles of the approach will be discussed there.

The third stage in the process of method design is to specify the role and function of the material, which is most often determined by the prior definition of the roles of the teacher and learners.

1.5 Summary

In this unit we have shown how any language teaching method can be described in terms of the issues identified here at the levels of **approach**, **design** and **procedure**. We have summarized some of the approaches and methods in use today. We have also discussed the differences between learner-centred materials and teacher-centred materials with reference to particular examples. Let us now turn to Communicative Language Teaching, in particular, and examine its historical background, and how it has reflected specific decisions at the levels of approach, design and procedure.

1.6 Recommended Reading

This is a list of the sources referred to in this unit. It is not really necessary for you to read any of them except Larsen-Freeman (2004) which is sent to you along with this block.

Anthony E.M., 1963. "Approach, method and technique" in *English Language Teaching* 17

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