Methods and Approaches in Language Teaching

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Organization of the Book

- Part 1. Foundations for Classroom Practice
- Part II. Contexts of Learning and Teaching
- Part III. Designing and Implementing Classroom Lessons
- Part IV. Teaching Language Skills
- Part V. Assessing Language Skills
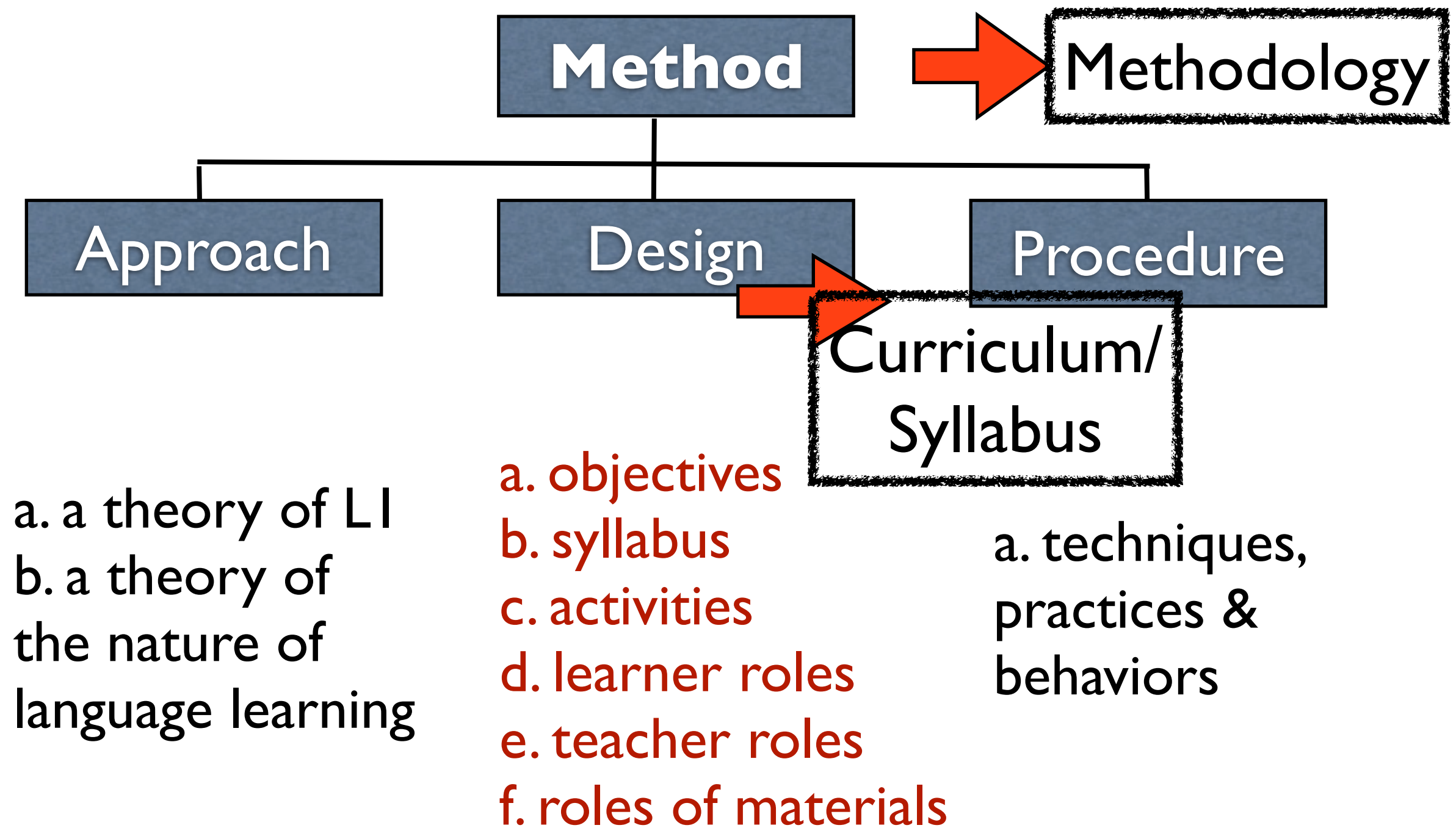- Part VI. Lifelong Learning

Organization

- A "Methodical" History of Language Teaching (Brown, Chapter 2)

- Discussion

Approach, Method, Technique

- Edward Anthony (1963) - commonly used today

    1. Approach: a set of assumptions

    2. Method: overall plan

    3. Techniques: specific activities

- Richards and Rogers (1982) - "*method*" as a superordinate term

    1. Approach: assumptions & beliefs

    2. Design: theories -> classroom

    3. Procedure: techniques and practices

- Contributions of R & R (1982, 2001)

1. Specification of the elements that comprise language-teaching designs

2. Relinquished the notion of a restrictive, prepackaged "method" → Instead helped us to think in terms of an approach, design and procedures

- Their attempt did not catch on in the literature → *confusion in terminology !*

Method → Methodology

Approach | Design | Procedure

Design:
a. objectives
b. syllabus
c. activities
d. learner roles
e. teacher roles
f. roles of materials

Curriculum/Syllabus

Approach:
a. a theory of L1
b. a theory of the nature of language learning

Procedure:
a. techniques, practices & behaviors

<Richards & Rogers (2001) - components of method>

Definitions to remember

- Approach: Theoretically informed positions and beliefs about the nature of language

- Method: A generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives, broadly applicable

- Technique: Any of a wide variety of exercises, activities, or tasks used in the language classroom (*task)

- Curriculum/syllabus: Designs for carrying out a particular language program

- Methodology: Pedagogical practices in general

Approach

- Theory of language

  1. Structural view (e.g., ALM, TPR, the Silent way)

  2. Functional view (e.g., functional syllabuses)

  3. Interactional view (e.g., task-based language teaching, whole language learning, CBI)

- Theory of language learning

  1. Stephan Krashen's Monitor model (e.g., Natural approach)

  2. Charles Curran's Counseling learning (e.g., Community Language Learning)

Changing winds and shifting sands...

- Cyclical nature of methods (e.g., Direct Method ➡ ALM)

- Currently, there is an emphasis on a unified, comprehensive *approach* rather than competing, restricted *methods*

The Grammar Translation Method

- the Classical Method: the learning of Latin or Greek, no theoretical foundations

- GTM (19th century-): withstood attempts to "reform" language-teaching methodology

- Characteristics:

  - ☑ Instructional language?

  - ☑ Vocabulary?

  - ☑ How is grammar taught?

  - ☑ Which skill is emphasized?

  - ☑ Pronunciation/Communication?

  - ☑ What types of exercises are given?

- "..remembered by distaste by thousands of school learners, for whom foreign language learning meant a tedious experience of memorizing endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose" (Richard and Rogers, 2001)

- Why does GTM remain so popular?

- "It is a method for which there is no theory" (Richard and Rogers, 2001)

Gouin and the Series Method

- Francois Gouin (1831-1896): "*The art of learning and studying languages*" (1880)

- Gouin's experience to "master" German through memorization of German books and dictionaries, translation all failed.

- Developed the Series Method after observing his 3-year-old nephew & children

- Language learning is a matter of transforming perceptions into conceptions.

- His method used situations as ways of organizing and presenting oral language

- Later became part of such methods as Situational Language Teaching and Total Physical Response

I walk toward the door.	I walk.
I draw near to the door.	I draw near.
I draw nearer to the door.	I draw nearer.
I get to the door.	I get to.
I stop at the door.	I stop.
I stretch out my arm.	I stretch out.
I take hold of the handle.	I take hold.
I turn the handle.	I turn.
I open the door.	I open.

The Direct Method

- Based on natural language learning principles
- Became widely known in the US through its use by Berlitz in successful commercial language schools
- Principles summarized by Richards & Rogers
  1. Target language
  2. Everyday vocabulary and sentences
  3. Oral communication skills
  4. Grammar was taught inductively
  5. New teaching points
  6. Vocabulary
  7. Speech and listening comprehension
  8. Correct pronunciation and grammar

- Popular during the early 20th century - "Berlitz" language schools

- Criticism - did not take well in public school, weak theoretical foundation

- By the end of the first quarter of the 20th century, most language curricula returned to the GTM or "reading approach" but it later revived through the Audiolingual method

The Audiolingual Method

- the Coleman Report (1929): schools returned in the 1930s-1940s to Grammar Translation

- WWII: the need for oral proficiency → "Army Method" → Audiolingual Method (1950s)

- Influenced by "Structural Linguistics" and "Behavioral Psychology"

- Characteristics of the ALM

1. New material is presented in dialogue form
2. Dependence on mimicry, memorization
3. Sequences of structures
4. Structural patterns
5. Little or no grammar

6. Vocabulary is strictly limited
7. Much use of tapes, visual aids
8. Pronunciation is important
9. Little use of the mother tongue
10. Successful responses are reinforced
11. Error-free utterances
12. Manipulate language and disregard content

- Popularity waned as it failed to teach long-term communicative proficiency

- Behavioral principles and Structural linguistics did not explain everything

Theories of First Language Acquisition

Behaviorist position:
tabula rasa, shaped by environment, conditioned through reinforcement

$\longleftrightarrow$

Cognitivist/ Constructivist:
innate knowledge, predispositions, biological timetables, learn through interaction and discourse

Behavioral approaches $\longleftrightarrow$ Nativist and Functional approaches
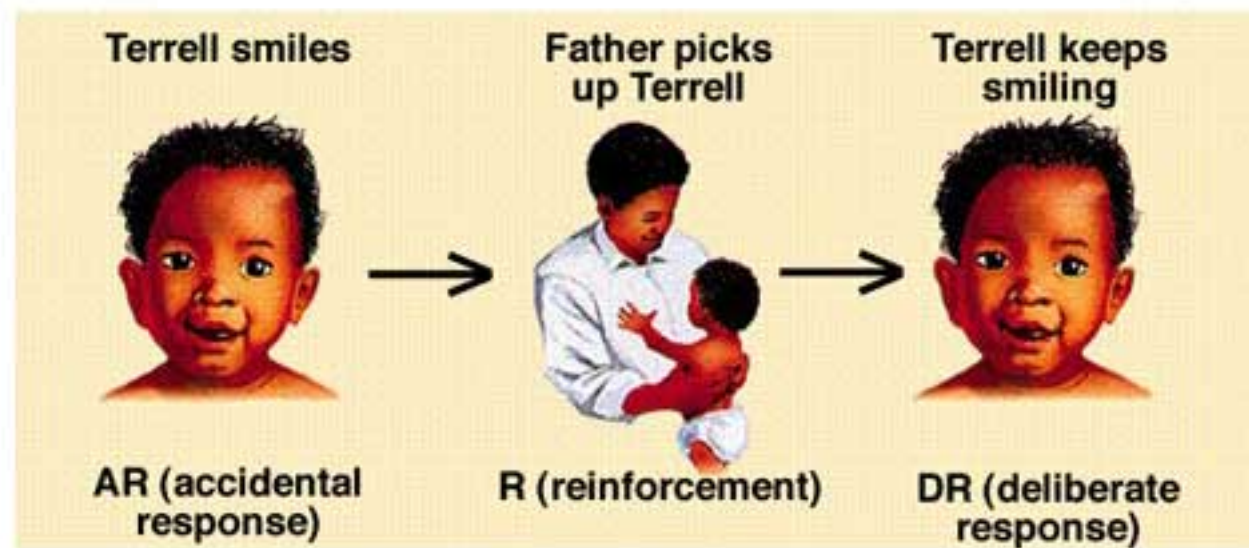
Behavioral Approaches

- Focused on the immediately perceptible (observable) aspects of linguistic behavior

- If a particular response is reinforced, it becomes habitual, or conditioned

- Children produce linguistic responses that are reinforced (children learn to comprehend by responding correctly and being reinforced for that response)

Skinner (1957, Verbal Behavior) Operant Conditioning

| Terrell smiles | Father picks up Terrell | Terrell keeps smiling |
| AR (accidental response) | R (reinforcement) | DR (deliberate response) |

<example of operant conditioning through positive reinforcement>

Organism(human being)

↓

Operant (acc. response)

↓

Positive/Negative Reinforcement (rewards/punishment)

↓

**Behavior is maintained or weakened**

Challenges to Behavioral Approaches

- **Critiques: conditioning and reinforcement *cannot* explain 1) the production of novel utterances by children (child's creativity), 2) the abstract nature of language, 3) the interactive nature of language acquisition**

Nativist Approach

- Language acquisition is innately determined

- Language is a "species-specific" behavior, biologically determined (Lenneberg, 1967)

- Innate knowledge is embodied in the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) (Chomsky, 1965)

- Fits with generative theories of language - can explain the creativity of child language & poverty of stimulus

- Universal Grammar: expanded the LAD notion by positing a system of universal linguistic rules

- Showed that the child's language is a legitimate system in its own right - <u>systematic</u> (constantly testing hypotheses)

This is a wug

Here's another one.

<The wug test>
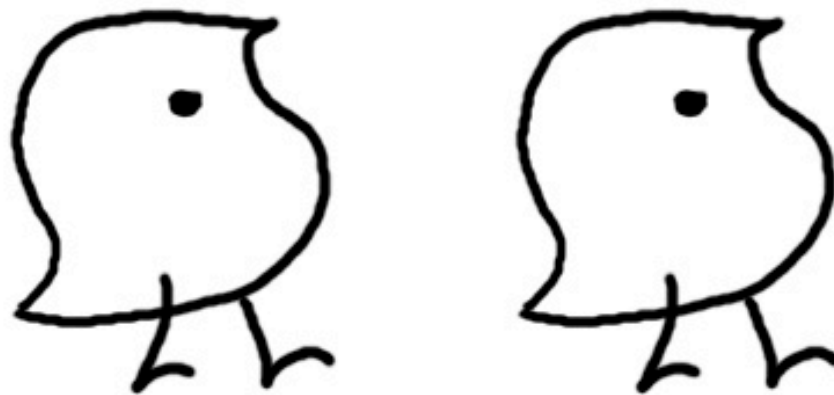
Cognitive Code Learning

- Influenced by Chomsky's Generative Transformational Grammar (a Nativist Approach)

- Promoted a deductive approach to rule learning

- Combined ALM and GT

- an approach that emphasized a conscious awareness of rules and their applications to L2 learning

- Short-lived as it overtaxed the mental reserves of language students

"Designer" Methods of the Spirited 1970s

Ausubel's Subsumption Theory

☐ Ausubel: learning takes place in the human organism through a *meaningful process of relating* new events to already existing cognitive concepts or propositions

Rote vs Meaningful Learning

❏ **rote learning**: the process of acquiring material as "discrete and relatively isolated entities that are relatable to cognitive structure only in an arbitrary and verbatim fashion, not permitting the establishment of meaningful relationships" (Ausubel, 1968)

☐ **meaningful learning (=subsumption)**: the process of relating and anchoring new material to relevant established entities in cognitive structure

Roger's Humanistic Psychology

- Roger's humanistic psychology: has more of an affective focus than a cognitive one, fall into the constructivist view of learning

- Influenced by "Client-Centered Therapy (1951)": analyzed general human learning through 19 formal principles of human behavior - learning from a "phenomenological" perspective

- the whole person, fully functioning persons →
  emotional, can reach full potential

- Implications for education

  - focus is on "learning" or "transformative
    pedagogy"

  - learning HOW to learn is more important

  - teachers need to be facilitators of learning
    through the establishment of interpersonal
    relationships

Community Language Learning

- Based on Charles Curran's "Counseling-learning" model of education

- Influenced by Carl Roger's view of education - supportive community, emphathetic relationship

- Group of clients seated in a circle with the counselor on the outside of the circle

- Affective advantages

- Practical and theoretical problems

- Principles of discovery learning, student-centered participation, and development of student autonomy

Suggestopedia

- Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov (1979)

- human brain can process great quantities of material if given the right conditions for learning - also called "*D*esuggestopedia"

- Music, relaxed states of consciousness

- Criticism

The Silent Way

- Founded by Caleb Cattegno, "humanistic" approach to education, problem-solving approach to learning

- Discovery-learning procedures: "subsumption" is enhanced, inductive learning

- The teacher is silent much of the time

- Utilizes a set of Cuisenaire rods and wall charts

- Criticism

Total Physical Response

- John Asher (1977)

- "trace theory" of learning through association with motor activity

- Children listen (accompanied by physical responses) before they speak

- Right-brain learning

- Imperative mood is utilized, no verbal response is necessary

- limitations

The Natural Approach

- Influenced by Stephen Krashen's theory of SLA and developed by Tracy Terrell

- production is delayed until speech "emerges" - "silent period"

- advocated the use of TPR activities at the beginning level to bring "comprehensible input"

- Goal: to build basic personal communication skills for everyday language situation

- Controversial aspects

Functional Syllabuses

- also known as the "notional-functional syllabus"

- attention to functions as the organizing elements of English language curriculum

- not a method but similar to an "approach" or a "syllabus"

- General notions/Specific notions

- Functions: identifying, reporting, denying...

- provided underpinnings for the development of communicative textbooks and materials

Discussion

- Review and compare the five designer methods & CLT on pages 36-37.