

1. Approach, method, and technique

The terms "approach," "method," and "technique" are often used interchangeably in various fields, leading to confusion and ambiguity. However, it is crucial to understand and distinguish these concepts, as they play distinct roles in the realms of problem-solving, research, and execution. Each term holds a specific significance in the context of a broader process, and grasping their unique characteristics is essential for effective communication and the successful application of these principles in diverse disciplines. This distinction helps ensure clarity and precision in discussions and practical endeavors.

The terms approach, method, and technique are defined by Brown (2001, p.14) as following:

- ✓ **Approach** « A set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning, and teaching. »
- ✓ **Method** « It is described as an overall plan for systematic presentation of language based upon a selected approach. »
- ✓ **Techniques** « The specific activities manifested in the classroom that are consistent with a method and therefore are in harmony with an approach as well. »

In order to describe the framework of the organization of these three terms, it is important to review briefly Anthony's and Richards & Rodgers' models. The following table shows how approach, method, and technique have been viewed by Anthony (1963) and Richards & Rodgers (1986):

Antony's model	Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Theory of language ▪ Theory of language
	Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach
	Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The actual implementation in the language classroom
Richards and Rodgers model	Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Theory of language ▪ Theory of language
	Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Objectives ▪ Syllabus type ▪ Activity types ▪ Learner Roles ▪ Teacher Roles ▪ Role of materials
	Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Techniques ▪ Practices ▪ Behaviors

Question for reflection:

To what extent do you believe that maintaining consistency among the concepts of 'approach,' 'method,' and 'technique' is imperative in practical application within the field of language teaching?

1.1. Language and Learning theories

The nature of language has been a topic of intense debate and theorizing in various fields, including linguistics, philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science. Here are the main theories about what language is and what learning is,

a. Language Theories

What is language?	Main Foci
Structuralism	Language is a system of interconnected structures that can be analyzed through the identification of phonemes, morphemes, and syntactic rules. (Ferdinand de Saussure's)
Generative Grammar	Noam Chomsky's theory proposes that language is innate to humans, and it is characterized by a universal grammar that underlies all languages. He introduced the concept of transformational grammar and emphasized syntax. (Noam Chomsky's)
Behaviorism	Language is a learned behavior that is acquired through conditioning,

	reinforcement, and imitation. (B.F. Skinner's)
Cognitive Linguistics	Language is closely tied to cognitive processes, and meaning is constructed through mental representations. This theory emphasizes conceptual metaphors and image schemas. (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's)
Functionalism	Language serves as a tool for communication and is shaped by its communicative functions. Functionalists examine how language is used in various social contexts. (Michael A. K. Halliday's)
Sociolinguistics	Theory: Language is not only a cognitive system but also a social and cultural phenomenon. It is influenced by social factors such as class, ethnicity, and geography. (William Labov's / Dell Hymes)

b. Learning theories

What is learning?	Main Foci
Behaviorism	considers language to be a learned behavior or habit which we acquire through a process of stimuli-response and positive reinforcement or punishment. Ivan Pavlov, John Watson and B.F. Skinner are considered the pioneers of this theory. They considered learning as a matter of “habit formation”. For them effective learning was a matter of reinforcing good habits, while errors were seen as bad habits.
Cognitivism	Cognitivism was coined by Chomsky. It came as a reaction to the behaviorist thought which ignores human's innate capacity to acquire language which also neglects the mental process of learning. Cognitivism argues that language is not just a learned habit devoid of creativity. It also suggests that humans are endowed with LAD (language Acquisition Device) which helps them not only learn whatever language they want but also use them creatively and not just imitating what's being said around them, this is because they are constantly using their cognitive abilities to think and creatively manipulate language
Constructivism	Jean Piaget is considered the pioneer of this learning theory. Constructivism states that learners of language should construct knowledge of language by themselves through exposure to the world or people and to languages (experiences and interaction), in this way the learners improve their linguistic knowledge. Therefore, we can say that people learn from one another and not in isolation from others.
Social Constructivism	Levs. Vygotsky is considered the initiator of this theory. Vygotsky posited that children learn their first languages by interacting with more linguistically knowledgeable people, that is to say they learn by interacting with people who knows language better than children do, and through engaging within society.