

Tikrit University

Collage of Education for Humanities

English Department



Techniques & principles in language teaching

Third Year

Introduction of Method

Asst. Lect. Noor Arkan Ghaleb

2024-2025

Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching by Diane Larsen-Freeman

Introduction Diane Larsen-Freeman's *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* is a foundational text in the field of language education. The book provides an overview of different methods and approaches used in teaching foreign languages. It aims to help educators understand the theoretical underpinnings of various techniques and how they can be applied in classroom settings. By presenting both historical and contemporary methodologies, Larsen-Freeman offers teachers the tools to adapt their instructional strategies to different learning environments.

The book is structured to introduce each method with a description, practical classroom applications, and a discussion of its strengths and weaknesses. This comparative approach allows teachers to evaluate and integrate multiple techniques into their own practice. The key focus of the book is not to prescribe a single “best” method, but rather to encourage a flexible and informed approach to language teaching.

Historical and Traditional Methods The book begins with an exploration of traditional methods that have influenced modern language teaching. These include:

1. **Grammar-Translation Method** – Rooted in classical language instruction, this method emphasizes memorization of grammatical rules and vocabulary, often through translation exercises. While it helps develop reading and writing skills, it is criticized for neglecting speaking and listening skills.
2. **Direct Method** – Developed as a reaction to the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method focuses on immersive

learning, where students are taught directly in the target language. Grammar is taught inductively, and speaking and listening are prioritized.

3. **Audiolingual Method** – Based on behaviorist principles, this method employs drills and repetition to instill language habits. It was widely used in military language programs but has been criticized for its lack of communicative focus.

Modern Communicative Approaches Larsen-Freeman highlights the shift from rigid structural approaches to more communicative and student-centered methodologies. These include:

1. **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** – A widely adopted approach that emphasizes interaction and real-life communication. Activities like role-playing, group discussions, and problem-solving exercises help learners develop fluency and confidence.
2. **Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)** – An extension of CLT, this method structures lessons around tasks that require students to use the target language to accomplish a goal, making learning more meaningful and contextualized.
3. **The Natural Approach** – Developed by Krashen and Terrell, this method prioritizes language acquisition over formal learning. It encourages exposure to comprehensible input and lowers learners' affective filters to enhance acquisition.
4. **Total Physical Response (TPR)** – A method that integrates movement and physical actions with language learning, often used with beginners and young learners.

Innovative and Alternative Methods In addition to mainstream methods, Larsen-Freeman explores alternative approaches that offer unique perspectives on language learning:

1. **The Silent Way** – This method encourages learner autonomy and discovery by minimizing teacher talk. Students use physical tools like Cuisenaire rods to explore language structure.
2. **Suggestopedia** – Developed by Georgi Lozanov, this method utilizes relaxation techniques and music to create a stress-free learning environment.
3. **Community Language Learning (CLL)** – This humanistic approach treats language learning as a collaborative effort between teachers and students, emphasizing emotional engagement.
4. **The Lexical Approach** – A modern perspective that focuses on the importance of lexical chunks and collocations in language acquisition, rather than traditional grammar-based instruction.

Language Acquisition vs. Language Learning

- **Language Acquisition:**
This refers to the subconscious, natural process by which individuals pick up language skills, often without formal instruction. In first language (L1) acquisition, young children effortlessly absorb the sounds, vocabulary, and grammar of their native language simply by being exposed to it in their environment. In second language (L2) acquisition, learners may also acquire language naturally, especially when immersed in an environment where the target language is spoken, though many factors (such as age and context) can affect this process.
- **Language Learning:**
In contrast, language learning is a conscious, formal process. This often involves structured lessons, explicit instruction on grammar rules, vocabulary memorization, and practice through exercises. Language learning is typically how older children and

adults approach a second language, although it can also apply to L1 in contexts where a more deliberate, academic approach is used (such as literacy training).

Methods in First and Second Language Contexts

A variety of teaching methods have been developed to facilitate both language acquisition and language learning, each with different emphases on input, practice, and output. Some key methods include:

1. Grammar-Translation Method:

- **Focus:** Explicit learning of grammar and vocabulary through translation exercises.
- **Application:** Traditionally used in second language learning, but less effective for developing communicative competence.

2. Direct Method:

- **Focus:** Immersive, natural use of the target language without translation.
- **Application:** Encourages acquisition through direct exposure and use, aligning more with natural acquisition processes.

3. Audiolingual Method:

- **Focus:** Drills, repetition, and habit formation based on behaviorist principles.
- **Application:** Often used in L2 contexts to develop pronunciation and sentence patterns but may lack emphasis on meaning.

4. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):

- **Focus:** Emphasizes interaction and the use of language in real-life contexts.
- **Application:** Supports both acquisition and learning by providing meaningful communication opportunities, essential for L2 learners.

5. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT):

- **Focus:** Learning language through completing meaningful tasks.
- **Application:** Encourages learners to use language creatively, bridging the gap between acquisition and formal learning, especially in L2 contexts.

6. Total Physical Response (TPR):

- **Focus:** Combines physical movement with language learning to help reinforce comprehension and memory.
- **Application:** Particularly useful in early L1 acquisition contexts and for beginners in L2 learning.

7. The Natural Approach:

- **Focus:** Emphasizes the importance of providing comprehensible input while reducing learner anxiety.
- **Application:** Particularly relevant for L2 learners in immersive or low-stress environments to foster natural acquisition.

Summary

- **First Language (L1):**
Typically acquired naturally by children through immersion and social interaction, without formal teaching.

- **Second Language (L2):**

Often involves both natural acquisition (especially in immersion settings) and structured learning (through classroom instruction). The balance between acquisition and learning may shift depending on the learner's age, context, and goals.

- **Teaching Methods:**

Various methods exist to support both acquisition and learning. While some, like the Direct Method or the Natural Approach, lean towards facilitating natural acquisition, others, such as the Grammar-Translation Method or Audiolingual Method, are more structured and rule-based. Modern approaches like CLT and TBLT blend these aspects to foster both understanding and practical use of the language.