

College of Education for Humanities

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Method of Research

“Approach and Method”

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1. Introduction

As the study of teaching methods and procedures in language teaching assumed a more central role within applied linguistics in the latter part of the twentieth century, various attempts have been made to conceptualize the nature of methods and to explore more systematically the relationship between theory and practice within a method. In this chapter we will clarify the relationship between approach and method and present a model for the description, analysis, and comparison of methods.

2 . Approach and Method

When linguists and language specialists sought to improve the quality of language teaching in the late nineteenth century, they often did so by referring to general principles and theories concerning how languages are learned , how knowledge of language is represented and organized in memory, or how language itself is structured .The early applied linguists, such as Henry Sweet (1845-1912) , Otto Jespersen (1860-1943) , and Harold Palmer (1877-1949), elaborated principles and theoretically accountable approaches to the design of language teaching programs ,courses, and materials, though many of the specific practical details were left to be worked out by others. They sought a rational answer to questions such as those regarding principles for the selection and sequencing of vocabulary and grammar, though none of these applied linguists saw in any existing method the ideal embodiment of their ideas. In describing methods, the difference between a philosophy of language teaching at the level of theory and principles and a set of derived procedures for teaching a language is central. In an attempt to clarify this difference, a scheme was proposed by the American applied linguist Edward Anthony in 1963. Lie identified three levels of conceptualization and organization, which he termed approach, method, and technique. The arrangement is hierarchical. The organizational key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach . An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning.

3 . An approach is axiomatic

It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. Method is 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. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within one approach, there can be many methods. A technique is implementation - that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well. According to Anthony's model, approach is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified; method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented; technique is the level at which classroom procedures are described. Anthony's model serves as a useful way of distinguishing between different degrees of abstraction and specificity found in different language teaching proposals. Thus, we can see that the proposals of the Reform Movement were at the level of approach and that the Direct Method is one method derived from this approach. The so - called Reading Method, which evolved as a result of the Coleman Report, should really be described in the plural - reading methods - since a number of different ways of implementing a reading approach have been developed . Other ways of conceptualizing approaches and methods in language teaching have also been proposed. Mackey, in his book *Language Teaching Analysis* (1965), elaborated perhaps the most well-known model of the 1960 s, one that focuses primarily on the levels of method and technique. Mackey's model of language teaching analysis concentrates on the dimensions of selection ,gradation, presentation, and repetition underlying a method. Although Anthony's original proposal has the advantage of simplicity and comprehensiveness and serves as a useful way of distinguishing the relationship between underlying theoretical principles and the practices derived from them, it does not give sufficient attention to the nature of a method itself. Nothing is said

4. Approach

Following Anthony, approach refers to theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching. In other words, it refers to the “philosophy,” or belief system, that a method reflects. We will examine the linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of approach in turn. Theory of Language Language is a very complex phenomenon and is studied from the perspective of many different disciplines, including linguistics, literature, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. Here we will briefly review models of language that have influenced language teaching methods and approaches. These include the Cognitive model, the Structural model, the Functional model, the Interactional model, the sociocultural model, the Genre model, and the Lexical model. Cognitive model A cognitive view of language is based on the idea that language reflects properties of the mind. Atkinson (2011: 4- 5) identifies a number of core features and assumptions of a cognitive view of language, or “cognitivist” :

1. Mind as a computer - a set of operations that take in input , process it , and produce output , as with a computer
2. Representationalism - processes that the mind engages in to store internal representations of external events
3. Learning as abstract knowledge acquisition - i .e. abstracting the rules of the competence that underlies linguistic performance, as Noam Chomsky put it . Chomsky’s theory of universal grammar,

5 . The Grammar Translation Method

can perhaps be understood as an early example of a cognitive view of Language since it reflects the idea that the learner has built up knowledge of the principles of 4 language by abstracting its rules though a study of grammar and through translation – based activities. Structural model Another way of conceptualizing language and one that has had a wide application in language teaching is the structural view, the view that language is a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning. The target of language learning is seen to be the mastery of elements of this system , which are generally defined in terms of phonological units (e .g. , phonemes) , grammatical

units (e . g., clauses, phrases, sentences) ,grammatical operations (e. g., adding, shifting, joining , or transforming elements) , and lexical items (e . g . , function words and structure words) . The Audio-lingual Method embodies this particular view of language as do such methods as Situational Language Teaching Total Physical Response. Functional Model A different model of language and one which takes a number of different forms is the functional view, the view that language is a vehicle for the expression of functional meanings and for performing real - world activities. Functional models of language are linked to the concept of communicative competence - knowing how language is used to achieve different kinds of communicative purposes. Functional approaches emphasize the semantic and communicative dimension rather than merely the grammatical characteristics of language, and lead to a specification and organization of language teaching content by categories of meaning and function rather than by elements of structure and grammar. Interactional model Yet another perspective on language can be called the interactional view . It sees language as a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals. Language is seen as a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relations. Areas of inquiry being