Lecture 2 : Teaching Approaches, Methods and Techniques

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1. Definitions

1.1 Approach

In didactics and TEFL, the term *approach* refers to the broad theoretical framework or philosophy underlying how language is understood and how learning is believed to occur. According to Anthony (1963), "An *approach* is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught." (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 19)

This means that an *approach* reflects the **theoretical and philosophical beliefs** that guide all instructional decisions — including the selection of methods and techniques. It is not a procedure, but rather a **conceptual orientation**. For example, a **communicative approach** views language as a tool for meaning-making and emphasizes authentic communication, whereas a **structural approach** sees language as a system of forms to be mastered.

The concept of approach is tied to how *didactic theory evolves from philosophical assumptions to pedagogical action*, moving from *Comenius's universal education philosophy* to modern *communicative and constructivist perspectives*. Thus, an *approach* answers the question: "What is language, and how is it best learned?"

1.2 Method

A *method* operationalizes an approach — it is the systematic plan or design for implementing an educational philosophy in the classroom. Anthony (1963) explains that: "A *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." (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 19). In other words, while an *approach* provides the **theoretical foundation**, a *method* provides the **procedural framework** — the *"how"* of teaching.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) later refined this by distinguishing three levels within a method: "The level of approach (theories), the level of design (objectives, syllabus, roles, materials), and the level of procedure (techniques and practices)." (p. 20)

For example:

- In the **Audiolingual Method**, based on a *behaviorist approach*, language is taught through stimulus-response patterns and habit formation.
- In **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**, derived from a *communicative approach*, teaching centers on interaction, meaning negotiation, and authentic communication.

Therefore, a *method* acts as a **bridge between theory and practice** — a coherent plan that ensures teaching procedures align with learning principles.

1.3 Technique

A *technique* is the most practical level — the actual classroom activity, strategy, or exercise used to achieve a specific teaching goal. Anthony (1963) defines it as: "A *technique* 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 cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 19). In other words, a technique is what the teacher **does in practice** — the tangible manifestation of the method's principles.

Examples include:

- Repetition and substitution drills (Audiolingual Method)
- Role-plays and information-gap tasks (Communicative Method)
- Guided discovery exercises (Cognitive/Constructivist Approach)

Techniques are **contextual and adaptable**; teachers may borrow or modify them across methods as long as they align with the underlying pedagogical approach.

1.4 Anthony's Hierarchical Model (1963)

Conceptual Structure

In his seminal essay "*Approach, Method, and Technique*" (1963), **Edward M. Anthony** proposed a **three-level hierarchy** that clarifies how abstract theories translate into concrete classroom practices. He wrote: "Approach is axiomatic, method is procedural, and technique is implementational." (Anthony, 1963, p. 63, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 19). This model shows a **top-down relationship**:

1. **Approach** → provides the *theoretical assumptions* about language and learning.
2. **Method** → provides the *procedural design* to implement the approach.
3. **Technique** → provides the *classroom actions* consistent with the method.

The relationship can be visualized as a **pedagogical pyramid**:

Approach (theory)

↓

Method (plan)

↓

Technique (action)

Interpretation and Significance

Anthony's model emphasizes *consistency* and *alignment* in teaching. It implies that techniques should not contradict the method's design, and methods should not contradict the underlying theoretical approach.

Later, Richards and Rodgers (1986) **expanded Anthony's framework** by proposing three interrelated dimensions — **Approach, Design, and Procedure** — refining how researchers and teachers analyze methods. They note that:

"A method is theoretically related to an approach, organized by a design, and realized in procedure." (p. 20)

In practical didactics, Anthony's model remains foundational because it:

- Encourages **pedagogical coherence** between theory and practice.
- Helps teachers **evaluate** whether classroom techniques align with learning goals.
- Provides a **conceptual tool** for understanding why certain methods work better in specific contexts.

To summarize these distinctions clearly, see the table below:

Level	Core Question	Nature	Example in TEFL
Approach	What is language? How is it learned?	Theoretical belief	Communicative, Structural, Constructivist
Method	How should language be taught systematically?	Procedural plan	Audiolingual, Direct Method, CLT, TBLT
Technique	What specific activities help achieve the objectives?	Practical classroom practice	Drills, Role-plays, Information-gaps

An *approach* provides **the philosophy**, a *method* provides **the plan**, and a *technique* provides **the action**. Together, they form a chain from **theory → design → practice**, ensuring that teaching is systematic and purposeful.

2. Historical Evolution:

2.1 Grammar–Translation Method

The **Grammar–Translation Method (GTM)** is one of the oldest and most traditional approaches to language teaching. It originated in 18th- and 19th-century Europe as a way of teaching classical languages such as Latin and Greek, which were valued for their intellectual and literary prestige rather than for communication. Over time, the same principles were applied to modern languages like English, French, and German (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

At its core, GTM views language **as a body of grammatical rules and vocabulary items** to be memorized and applied through translation. The main objective is **accuracy** — students are expected to understand and manipulate grammatical structures precisely rather than to use them spontaneously in conversation. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), the method "treats language learning as a process of mental discipline and intellectual development," emphasizing **written proficiency over oral fluency** (p. 3).

In this approach, **explicit grammar instruction** dominates classroom activity. Lessons typically begin with an explanation of a grammatical rule, followed by examples and translation exercises to and from the mother tongue (L1). Teachers present vocabulary lists, paradigms, and syntactic structures for memorization. Literary texts, often adapted from canonical works, serve as material for **reading comprehension, vocabulary building, and cultural appreciation**. Students analyze and translate these passages into their native language, reinforcing both linguistic form and literary style (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

GTM assumes that mastering grammatical forms and vocabulary **leads naturally to the ability to read and write in the target language**, while oral skills are considered secondary or even unnecessary. The **teacher's role** is highly authoritative — the teacher is the expert who explains rules, corrects errors, and guides translation work. The **learner's role** is largely passive, focusing on memorization and accurate reproduction of structures rather than communicative interaction (Brown, 2007).

Pedagogically, the method fits within a **structural and prescriptive view of language**: language is a fixed system to be mastered, and correctness reflects mental discipline. In that sense, GTM aligns more with a **cognitive–intellectualist tradition** than with a communicative one — learning is seen as the internalization of linguistic facts rather than the development of communicative ability.

Despite its limitations, the Grammar–Translation Method has had a lasting legacy. It established the early tradition of **systematic grammar teaching, structured syllabuses, and the use of translation as a pedagogical tool**, elements that continue to influence modern foreign language

instruction in many contexts, particularly where examinations prioritize written accuracy and reading comprehension.

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
  - Translation of sentences or literary passages from L2 to L1 and vice versa.
  - **Parsing and grammatical analysis** of sentences (identifying parts of speech, verb tenses, and syntactic structures).
  - **Memorization** of grammar rules, vocabulary lists, and paradigms (e.g., verb conjugations).
  - **Written exercises** such as gap-fills or sentence transformations to apply grammatical rules.
  - **Reading comprehension** tasks focusing on literal understanding of texts rather than inference or personal interpretation.
- **Syllabus:**
  - A **structural and sequential grammar syllabus**, where linguistic forms are presented in logical progression — e.g., noun declensions → verb tenses → subordinate clauses.
  - Content often drawn from **literary or classical texts**, selected for their grammatical richness rather than communicative relevance.
  - Evaluation through **written tests** on grammar and translation accuracy.

Summary Table

Feature	Description
Goal	Develop reading and writing accuracy through grammar mastery and translation.
Teacher's Role	Authority, explainer, corrector.
Learner's Role	Passive recipient; memorizes rules and applies them in translation.
Skills Focus	Reading and writing (listening/speaking neglected).
Materials	Literary texts, grammar rules, vocabulary lists.
Assessment	Written tests on grammar and translation.

Advantages / Limitations

- Good for understanding formal grammar and reading classical texts.
- Poor at developing speaking/listening fluency, communicative competence, or task performance in real situations.

2.2 Direct Method

The **Direct Method** emerged in the late 19th century as a **reaction against the Grammar–Translation Method**, which emphasized written translation and grammatical analysis. Proponents such as **Charles Berlitz** and **François Gouin** argued that languages should be learned more naturally — **through direct exposure, use, and association with meaning**, rather than through the medium of the mother tongue (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

In the Direct Method, **all instruction takes place in the target language**. Grammar is not taught explicitly but is **inductively discovered** by learners through examples and guided interaction. Vocabulary and structures are presented through **real-life situations, demonstrations, and visual aids**, reflecting the belief that language learning should imitate the way we acquire our first language — through listening, speaking, and immediate association between words and objects or actions.

The theoretical foundation of the Direct Method draws on **naturalistic learning principles** and **cognitive associationism**: the idea that direct connections between perception and language lead to deeper retention. The teacher serves as a **facilitator and model**, engaging learners in question–answer exchanges, dialogues, and role-plays to promote thinking in the target language. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), this method "emphasizes vocabulary acquisition through exposure to spoken language, with teaching points determined by situations rather than by linguistic structures" (p. 9). The ultimate goal is to develop **oral fluency and intuitive grammatical control** through meaningful communication.

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
    - Classroom communication entirely in the target language.
    - Use of objects, pictures, and demonstrations to convey meaning.
    - Q&A sequences ("What is this?" "It is a book.").
    - Inductive grammar teaching (students infer rules from examples).
    - Reading aloud, dialogues, and conversational practice.
- **Syllabus:**
    - **Situational and topical organization** (e.g., "At the restaurant," "Traveling by train").
    - Progression based on **everyday functions and vocabulary**, not abstract grammar sequences.
    - Strong emphasis on **oral interaction and pronunciation**.

2.3 Audiolingual Method

The **Audiolingual Method (ALM)** appeared in the United States during the 1940s and 1950s, shaped by two powerful intellectual forces: **structural linguistics** and **behaviorist psychology**. Its aim was to develop oral proficiency through **habit formation**, **pattern drills**, and **mimicry**, reflecting the behaviorist view that learning is the result of stimulus–response–reinforcement chains (Skinner, 1957; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

According to this model, students must repeat and practice correct forms until they become automatic. Grammar is taught inductively — not through explanation but through repeated exposure and reinforcement. Errors are viewed as signs of imperfect learning and must be **immediately corrected** to prevent "bad habits."

As structural linguistics emphasized the systematic description of language, ALM introduced carefully sequenced teaching of **phonology, morphology, and syntax**. Lessons typically followed a "listen and repeat" cycle, beginning with a **dialogue**, followed by **drills** and **substitution patterns** to internalize structures.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) summarize: "Language learning is a process of mechanical habit formation, and the teacher's task is to help students develop correct habits through conditioning" (p. 50).

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
  - **Dialogues for memorization** as models of correct language use.
  - **Repetition, substitution, and transformation drills.**
  - **Pronunciation practice** through minimal pairs (e.g., ship/sheep).
  - Immediate correction and reinforcement.
  - **Listening before speaking** — comprehension precedes production.
- **Syllabus:**
  - **Structural and sequential syllabus**, progressing from simple to complex grammar.
  - **Oral skills prioritized**, with reading and writing introduced later.
  - **Graded vocabulary lists** linked to structural patterns (e.g., "simple present," "modal verbs").

2.4 Humanistic Approaches to Language Teaching

The **Humanistic Approaches** to language teaching emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a **reaction against mechanistic, teacher-centered, and behaviorist models** such as the Audiolingual Method. These methods were deeply influenced by **humanistic psychology**, especially the works of **Carl Rogers** (*Freedom to Learn*, 1969) and **Abraham Maslow** (*Motivation and Personality*, 1954), who emphasized *the whole person* — emotional, intellectual, and social dimensions of learning.

The central idea is that **language learning is not just a cognitive or behavioral process**, but a deeply **personal and affective experience**.

When learners feel **safe, valued, and autonomous**, they are more likely to take risks, express themselves, and internalize new language forms. This idea gave rise to several influential methods under the humanistic umbrella, including:

- **The Silent Way** (Caleb Gattegno, 1972)
- **Community Language Learning (CLL)** (Charles Curran, 1976)
- **Suggestopedia** (Georgi Lozanov, 1978)
- **Total Physical Response (TPR)** (James Asher, 1977)

Each of these methods embodies the humanistic ideal that *teaching should serve the learner as a person* — promoting not only linguistic competence but also confidence, creativity, and emotional well-being.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), humanistic approaches "attempt to integrate the intellectual and emotional aspects of learning, focusing on the development of self-awareness and interpersonal skills as essential components of communicative ability" (p. 97).

The Silent Way stands out as one of the most original and thought-provoking applications of humanistic principles in TEFL.

2.4.1. The Silent Way

Developed by **Caleb Gattegno**, a mathematician and educator, **The Silent Way** rests on the belief that **learning is best achieved when students discover and construct knowledge themselves**, rather than being told or corrected by the teacher.

It is grounded in **constructivist learning theory** and **humanistic principles of learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation**. Gattegno (1972) believed that excessive teacher talk and correction made students dependent and passive. Instead, he proposed a **"silent teacher"** who guides learners to develop their own inner criteria for correctness through discovery and self-repair.

Gattegno famously stated: "Teaching should be subordinated to learning." — *Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools: The Silent Way* (1972, p. 1)

The Silent Way views language learning as a **creative, problem-solving process**. The teacher provides minimal input, uses visual aids (especially **Cuisenaire rods** and **sound-color charts**) to represent grammatical and phonological concepts, and encourages students to *notice*, *experiment*, and *self-correct*.

This method develops both **metalinguistic awareness** (how the language works) and **psychological independence**, aligning closely with Rogers' idea of *learner-centered education*.

In short, The Silent Way aims to **make learners self-reliant explorers of language**, rather than passive recipients of information.

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
  - Use of **Cuisenaire rods** to illustrate sentence patterns, prepositions, and word order.
  - **Sound–color charts** linking phonemes to colors to teach pronunciation and spelling.
  - **Minimal teacher talk** — the teacher remains mostly silent, prompting learners to produce, notice, and correct errors.
  - **Peer correction and group discovery** encouraged instead of direct teacher correction.
  - **Gestures and facial expressions** replace verbal instruction.
  - Language taught through **problem-solving activities** rather than explanations.
- **Syllabus:**
  - **Structural-functional syllabus**, organized by basic communicative functions and grammatical complexity.
  - Focus on **phonological control** and **sentence formation** before expanding to free communication.
  - Lessons build gradually from simple sounds and structures to more complex utterances.
  - Content emerges dynamically from learner output and classroom discovery.

Why It Works Didactically?

Humanistic Principle	Application in The Silent Way
Learner Autonomy	Students discover and correct their own errors.
Affective Safety	Teacher's silence reduces anxiety and fear of correction.
Intrinsic Motivation	Discovery creates intellectual curiosity and engagement.
Whole-Person Learning	Physical, visual, and cognitive elements integrated through rods and charts.

The Silent Way represents a **transitional stage** between **behaviorist methods** (like Audiolingualism) and **cognitive–communicative methods** (like CLT). Where the Audiolingual Method viewed the learner as a conditioned subject, the Silent Way viewed the learner as a **self-**

directed problem solver. Where earlier methods emphasized **accuracy**, Gattegno emphasized **awareness** — the learner's conscious control of linguistic forms through introspection and reflection.

This shift paved the way for the **Communicative Movement**, which extended the humanistic concern for learner autonomy into authentic social interaction.

2.4.2. Community Language Learning (CLL) – Charles Curran (1976)

Community Language Learning (CLL) was developed by **Charles A. Curran**, an American psychologist and Jesuit priest, in the 1970s. It is a **humanistic and counseling-based approach** inspired by **Carl Rogers' (1969) Client-Centered Therapy** and **humanistic psychology**.

Curran viewed the classroom as a **learning community** in which the teacher acts as a *counselor* and the learners as *clients*. The method seeks to reduce anxiety, build trust, and promote learner autonomy through supportive group interaction.

In this framework, the teacher helps students express themselves in the target language by providing linguistic support when requested, while gradually transferring responsibility for communication to the learners.

Curran (1976) explained that "the teacher's role is to understand the student's intention and provide the language that meets that intention," allowing learners to "own" their language production.

CLL thus reframes the language classroom as a **cooperative space** where empathy, affective support, and self-expression are as vital as grammatical accuracy. It echoes the humanistic principle that **"learning is best achieved when learners feel understood."**

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
  - *Counseling–Learning Sessions*: students express an idea in their L1; the teacher provides an L2 translation, which students repeat and record.
  - *Recorded Conversations*: learners record dialogues and later transcribe and analyze them.
  - *Reflection Circles*: post-activity group discussions on feelings, difficulties, and strategies.
  - *Translation and Paraphrasing*: gradual reduction of L1 reliance as confidence grows.
  - *Learner-generated Syllabus*: topics and language forms emerge naturally from students' communicative needs.
- **Syllabus:**
  - *Emergent and learner-centered* — content arises from student-generated conversations.

- Focuses on **meaningful interaction** and **emotional engagement** rather than fixed grammatical sequences.

Why It Works Didactically?

Humanistic Principle	Application in CLL
Affective Safety	Supportive teacher–student relationship reduces fear of error.
Learner-Centeredness	Learners determine topics and pace of learning.
Autonomy	Gradual shift of control from teacher to learner.
Reflection	Students discuss emotional and linguistic progress openly.

2.4.3. Suggestopedia (1978)

Suggestopedia**,** created by **Georgi Lozanov**, a Bulgarian psychologist and educator, is another major humanistic method that focuses on **lowering affective barriers and using suggestion, relaxation, and positive emotions** to enhance learning.

Lozanov (1978) believed that traditional schooling often creates *psychological barriers* — fear of failure, stress, or inhibition — which block learning. Suggestopedia aims to overcome these barriers through **music, art, drama, and relaxation**, tapping into the **paraconscious mind** where memory and creativity flourish.

The method draws from **psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, and humanistic education**. Lozanov proposed that suggestion — both verbal (teacher's words) and non-verbal (tone, music, environment) — can **stimulate the brain's natural learning capacity**.

In a suggestopedic classroom, the atmosphere is **aesthetic, relaxed, and emotionally engaging**. Learners are immersed in meaningful content delivered through **rhythmic intonation, music, and dramatized reading**, fostering a deep affective connection to language.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) note that Suggestopedia "encourages students to adopt a new identity, relax their conscious control, and allow subconscious learning to occur through enjoyment and confidence."

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
  - *Concert Reading*: teacher reads a text dramatically with classical music accompaniment.
  - *Peripheral Learning*: posters, visuals, and decorations reinforce vocabulary subconsciously.
  - *Positive Suggestion*: teacher uses affirming language and a warm tone to promote self-belief.

- *Role-play & Dramatization*: students act out dialogues using imaginative identities.
- *Music and Rhythm*: Baroque or instrumental music used to pace reading and relaxation.

- **Syllabus:**
  - Organized around **dialogues, vocabulary, and cultural themes**.
  - Each "unit" includes *presentation*, *concert reading*, *practice*, and *production* phases.
  - Emphasizes **aesthetic experience and emotional engagement** rather than grammatical sequencing.

Why It Works Didactically?

Humanistic Principle	Application in Suggestopedia
Affective Safety	Relaxation and music reduce anxiety.
Positive Self-Concept	Suggestion and role-play boost confidence.
Holistic Learning	Combines auditory, visual, and emotional modalities.
Enjoyment and Flow	Learners associate language with pleasure and creativity.

2.4.4. Total Physical Response (1977)

Total Physical Response **(TPR)**, developed by **James J. Asher** in the late 1970s, is a **humanistic, kinesthetic method** based on the coordination of **speech and physical movement**.

It draws from **behavioral psychology**, **trace theory of memory**, and **first language acquisition research** — especially the observation that children understand commands before they can produce language.

Asher (1977) proposed that language learning should mirror the **natural acquisition process**: comprehension precedes production.

The method encourages learners to **listen, respond physically, and internalize meaning** before speaking, thus minimizing anxiety and allowing spontaneous speech to emerge naturally.

TPR aligns with humanistic principles because it **reduces stress**, **engages the body and mind**, and makes learning **active and enjoyable**. According to Asher, "language learning is most effective when it involves motor activity and when learners are not forced to speak before they are ready."

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
  - *Imperative Commands*: teacher issues commands (e.g., "Stand up," "Open the book") and demonstrates actions.
  - *Role Reversal*: students later give commands to peers or the teacher.
  - *Action Sequences*: series of commands forming meaningful routines (e.g., "Go to the door, open it, and wave to your friend.")

- *Games and Simulations*: Simon Says, storytelling with gestures, or physical dramatization.

- **Syllabus:**
  - Based on **situational and lexical content** (verbs, actions, classroom language).
  - Early focus on **listening comprehension**, progressing to **speaking** once comprehension is strong.
  - Grammar is acquired inductively through repeated exposure to meaningful commands.

Why It Works Didactically?

Humanistic Principle	Application in TPR
Stress Reduction	Learners are not forced to speak prematurely.
Active Involvement	Physical movement enhances memory and engagement.
Natural Learning Sequence	Comprehension precedes production.
Enjoyment and Playfulness	Learning through movement fosters motivation.

Synthesis: The Humanistic Wave in TEFL

Method	Founder	Key Focus	Teacher Role	Learner Role	Classroom Feature
The Silent Way	Caleb Gattegno	Discovery learning, autonomy	Silent facilitator	Self-directed problem solver	Rods, charts, silence
CLL	Charles Curran	Trust, empathy, collaboration	Counselor	Client → autonomous communicator	Recorded conversations
Suggestopedia	Georgi Lozanov	Relaxation, suggestion, emotion	Encourager, performer	Relaxed, imaginative learner	Music, dramatization
TPR	James Asher	Comprehension through action	Director → participant	Active responder	Commands, movement

2.5 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Emerging in the 1970s, **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** marked a major shift from structure-based instruction to **meaning-based and function-oriented pedagogy**. Influenced by **Dell Hymes' (1972)** concept of *communicative competence*, CLT argues that knowing a language means not just mastering grammar and vocabulary, but also being able to **use language appropriately in real contexts**.

In CLT, language is viewed as a tool for **communication, negotiation, and social interaction**. Lessons focus on **fluency, meaning, and authentic use**, while accuracy is developed through purposeful communication rather than mechanical drills. The teacher acts as a **facilitator, organizer, and co-communicator**, guiding learners to express meaning, solve problems, and collaborate (Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Littlewood, 2018).

The theoretical foundations combine insights from **sociolinguistics**, **functional linguistics (Halliday)**, and **Second Language Acquisition research**, particularly the role of **input, interaction, and output** (Krashen, Long, Swain). Learners acquire language by using it for genuine purposes — through tasks, role plays, and discussions that simulate real communication.

As Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) summarize, "the goal of CLT is to enable students to communicate in the target language in authentic social contexts," emphasizing fluency, meaning negotiation, and learner autonomy.

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
    - Role plays, interviews, and problem-solving tasks.
    - Information-gap and opinion-gap activities.
    - Pair and group work for negotiation of meaning.
    - Integration of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).
    - Use of authentic materials (menus, timetables, websites, news articles).
- **Syllabus:**
    - **Functional-notional** or **task-based syllabus** — organized around communicative functions (e.g., requesting, apologizing, suggesting).
    - **Focus on meaning**, with grammar taught implicitly or as needed (focus-on-form).
    - Assessment through **performance tasks** and **real-world outcomes** (e.g., presentations, interviews, projects).

Comparative Summary Table

Feature	Grammar–Translation	Direct Method	Audiolingual Method	Communicative Approach (CLT)
Main Goal	Accuracy, reading & writing	Oral fluency, intuitive grammar	Habit formation, oral accuracy	Fluency, communicative competence
View of Language	System of rules	Means of communication	Structured patterns	Functional, social system
Learning Theory	Mental discipline	Natural acquisition	Behaviorism	Sociocultural/interactionist
Role of Teacher	Authority, explainer	Model, facilitator	Drill leader	Organizer, co-communicator
Techniques	Translation, memorization	Q&A, demonstration	Dialogues, drills	Tasks, role-plays, group work
Language Use	Mainly written, L1 medium	Only L2, everyday topics	Oral practice, controlled	Authentic, purposeful
Assessment	Grammar tests	Oral performance	Accuracy tests	Communicative tasks

2.6 Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) evolved in the 1980s and 1990s as an extension and refinement of **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**. While CLT emphasized communication as a goal, TBLT placed **tasks** — real-world, meaning-oriented activities — at the **core of the learning process** (Nunan, 1989; Ellis, 2003).

A **task** is defined as "an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective" (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001, p. 11). In other words, learners learn the language **by using it**, not by merely studying its forms.

The **theoretical foundation** of TBLT lies in **second language acquisition (SLA) research**, particularly:

- **Krashen's Input Hypothesis** (comprehensible input promotes acquisition),
- **Long's Interaction Hypothesis** (negotiation of meaning fosters learning), and
- **Swain's Output Hypothesis** (producing language helps learners notice gaps in their knowledge).

TBLT also reflects **constructivist and sociocultural principles**: learners construct knowledge through collaboration, problem-solving, and authentic communication (Vygotsky, 1978; Willis, 1996).

According to Ellis (2003), "tasks provide a natural context for language use, pushing learners to process meaning, form, and function simultaneously."

Unlike traditional methods, TBLT does not organize the syllabus around grammar or vocabulary lists. Instead, it is structured around **communicative tasks** that mirror what learners might do

outside the classroom — writing an email, solving a problem, conducting an interview, or planning a trip.

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
  - **Information-gap tasks** (students share missing information to complete a task).
  - **Problem-solving tasks** (students use language to find solutions).
  - **Jigsaw tasks** (each learner has different information; they must communicate to complete a whole).
  - **Project work** (students plan, design, and present outcomes collaboratively).
  - **Task cycle**: pre-task → task performance → planning/report → analysis and language focus (Willis, 1996).
- **Syllabus:**
  - **Task-based syllabus** organized by communicative outcomes and cognitive demands (not grammatical items).
  - Tasks increase in **complexity** based on factors like reasoning, time pressure, or number of steps (Ellis, 2003).
  - Grammar and vocabulary are addressed through **focus-on-form** after or during task completion, as learners encounter linguistic gaps.

2.7 Postmethod Approach

The Postmethod Approach, proposed by **B. Kumaravadivelu (2001, 2006)**, emerged as a **critical response to the limitations of prescriptive teaching methods** — including CLT and TBLT. It argues that no single method can fit all classrooms, cultures, or learners, and that teachers must be empowered to design **context-sensitive, reflective, and flexible pedagogy**.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) defines postmethod pedagogy as "a state of teacher autonomy that enables practitioners to theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize." This means teachers are not passive consumers of methods but **active creators of classroom theory**.

The Postmethod perspective rests on three interrelated parameters:

1. **Particularity** – teaching must respond to local contexts (sociocultural, institutional, learner-specific).
2. **Practicality** – teachers should derive theory from their classroom experience rather than depend solely on external experts.
3. **Possibility** – pedagogy should empower learners and teachers, promoting critical awareness and social transformation.

Philosophically, the Postmethod Approach draws from **critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970)**, **reflective teaching (Schön, 1983)**, and **constructivist learning theory**. It seeks to overcome the "method dependency" that dominated 20th-century TEFL and to encourage **principled eclecticism** — the informed integration of techniques from multiple approaches, guided by context and learner needs.

Typical Techniques and Syllabus

- **Techniques:**
  - Reflective teaching journals and peer observation.
  - Contextual adaptation of techniques (e.g., combining CLT tasks with grammar-focused activities for exam contexts).
  - Use of local cultural materials to make learning relevant.
  - Negotiated syllabus (teacher and learners co-design topics or tasks).
  - Action research and continuous self-evaluation.
- **Syllabus:**
  - **Context-sensitive and dynamic** — not pre-packaged.
  - Built around **learner needs, institutional goals, and social realities**.
  - Incorporates elements of **communicative, cognitive, and sociocultural learning** as needed.
  - Encourages **teacher autonomy** and **learner agency**.

Evolutionary Connection

Stage	Core Focus	Representative Thinkers	View of the Teacher	View of the Learner	Main Goal
Grammar–Translation	Language as written form & rule system	Seidenstücker, Plötz	Authority, explainer	Passive receiver	Accuracy & translation
Direct Method	Natural acquisition through use	Berlitz, Gouin	Model & facilitator	Active imitator	Oral fluency
Audiolingual Method	Habit formation & structural patterning	Skinner, Fries	Drill leader, corrector	Conditioned responder	Automatic accuracy
Communicative Approach	Interaction & meaning-making	Hymes, Widdowson	Organizer, co-communicator	Negotiator of meaning	Communicative competence
Task-Based Learning	Authentic tasks & real use	Nunan, Ellis, Willis	Task designer, guide	Problem-solver, collaborator	Functional fluency
Postmethod	Contextualized, reflective practice	Kumaravadivelu	Theorizer of own practice	Empowered participant	Autonomy & contextual relevance

Pedagogical Takeaway

"Methods may guide, but context decides." — Adapted from Kumaravadivelu (2006)

Modern TEFL is not about following one method blindly, but about **understanding the rationale behind methods**, and then **adapting or blending them** intelligently to serve specific learners, contexts, and purposes.

2.8 Contemporary Didactics in TEFL

Contemporary didactics represents the current stage in the evolution of TEFL methodology — one that integrates **technology, learner motivation, materials design, and teacher cognition** into a holistic, context-driven approach. Rather than prescribing one dominant method (as in earlier eras), today's didactics is **adaptive, reflective, and multimodal**. It recognizes that effective teaching requires the intelligent blending of **technological tools**, **authentic materials**, and **psychological insight** into learners' identities, goals, and affective needs.

Technology and CALL Normalisation

According to **Stephen Bax (2003)**, the ultimate goal of educational technology is its **"normalisation"** — the point at which technology becomes an invisible, natural part of the learning environment rather than a novelty.

Bax argues that teachers should not treat digital tools as external "add-ons" but as **seamlessly integrated instruments** for communication, collaboration, and self-directed learning. For instance, podcasts, digital portfolios, and AI-powered writing assistants can all serve didactic aims — provided they are pedagogically grounded and accessible to learners.

This marks a shift from viewing CALL as *computer-centered* to seeing it as *learner-centered*.

Materials Development and Authenticity

Brian Tomlinson (2011, 2013) emphasizes that learning materials must be **affective, engaging, and authentic** to stimulate real communication. He defines materials development as "anything done by teachers or learners to provide sources of language input and to exploit those sources in ways that maximize learning" (Tomlinson, 2011, p. 2).

This includes textbooks, online content, videos, and learner-generated materials. Tomlinson advocates the use of **authentic, meaningful texts** that reflect real-world discourse and **stimulate emotional as well as cognitive engagement**.

Thus, material design today goes beyond linguistic accuracy — it seeks to **connect with learners' interests, identities, and emotions**.

Motivation and the Self-System

Zoltán Dörnyei's (2009) *L2 Motivational Self System* reframed motivation as a dynamic process shaped by **learners' self-images and aspirations**.

He identified three interrelated components:

1. The **Ideal L2 Self** (the image of oneself as a successful L2 user),
2. The **Ought-to L2 Self** (external expectations and responsibilities), and
3. The **Learning Experience** (situational factors that influence engagement).

In practice, this means teachers should design learning tasks that **connect language learning to students' personal goals**, self-esteem, and future visions. Motivation is no longer seen as a static "trait" but as a **developable resource** that teachers can cultivate through feedback, autonomy, and meaningful use of language.

Teacher Cognition and Professional Reflection

Finally, **Simon Borg (2006, 2015)** reminds us that teachers' beliefs, experiences, and thought processes — known as *teacher cognition* — profoundly shape classroom practice.

Even the most advanced technological tools or materials will fail if teachers are not **reflectively engaged** and professionally supported to adapt them. Borg's work situates the teacher as a **thinking professional** who interprets and contextualizes pedagogical innovations within the realities of their classrooms.

Synthesis

Contemporary didactics thus stands on four intertwined pillars:

1. **Technology integration** as normal, not exceptional (Bax).
2. **Authentic and affective materials** that engage the learner holistically (Tomlinson).
3. **Motivation as identity-driven and dynamic** (Dörnyei).
4. **Reflective and adaptive teacher cognition** (Borg).

Together, these principles encourage teachers to design lessons that are **personally meaningful, technologically relevant, and pedagogically flexible**, aligning with the postmethod emphasis on *contextual particularity* and *teacher autonomy*.

Why This Activity Works Didactically?

Principle	Applied Example
CALL Normalisation (Bax)	Technology (podcasting) used as a natural tool for communication, not a novelty.
Authentic Materials (Tomlinson)	Real-life topics and genres motivate learners to produce meaningful content.
Motivational Self-System (Dörnyei)	Learners imagine themselves as confident L2 speakers addressing an audience.
Teacher Cognition (Borg)	The teacher reflects on learners' beliefs, provides adaptive feedback, and models reflective learning.

3. Theoretical Underpinnings

3.1 Behaviorism

Behaviorism views learning as a change in observable behaviour produced by environmental stimuli and reinforcement; internal mental states are not the focus. Instruction is framed as a sequence of stimulus → response → reinforcement cycles (Skinner's operant conditioning is the classic exemplar). Teachers shape correct responses through repetition, modelling and corrective feedback. (Skinner, 1957; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Methodological descendants: Audiolingual Method, drill-based structural approaches. (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

How it views language learning

Language is practiced until appropriate habits form: accurate forms are reinforced; incorrect forms are corrected immediately. The focus is on automaticity, mimicry and accurate production rather than internal rules or meaning negotiation.

Classroom implications

- Lessons emphasize **controlled practice** and repetition (drills, substitution tables, pattern practice).
- Teacher is model, controller of input and supplier of reinforcement.
- Error correction is immediate and explicit (recast, correct-and-repeat).

Advantages

- Rapid automatization of specific forms and pronunciation; easily measurable progress.
- Useful for early beginners needing oral pattern practice.

Limitations

- Neglects meaning, creativity and communicative competence. Chomsky's critique of behaviorism argued that language acquisition cannot be explained purely by stimulus–response because of creativity/novel utterances (Chomsky, 1965).
- Poor transfer to spontaneous communication; risk of rote, decontextualised learning.

3. 2 Cognitivism

Cognitivism treats learning as an internal mental process: learners build mental representations, organise knowledge into schemas, and process input. Chomsky's linguistic theory shifted focus to underlying competence (internalized grammatical knowledge) and argued that exposure alone (behaviorist conditioning) cannot explain language acquisition; learners have creative, rule-based capacities. (Chomsky, 1965; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

How it views language learning

- Learning involves **mental processing**: noticing, storing, retrieving, automating.
- Instruction must support organization of knowledge (sequencing, chunking) and reduce processing load (scaffolding, advance organizers). Ausubel's meaningful learning stresses linking new content to prior knowledge. Bloom's taxonomy provides levels for objectives (remember → apply → evaluate). (Ausubel; Bloom).

Classroom implications

- Emphasize clear **explanations**, **organisers**, and **scaffolded tasks**.
- Use discovery tasks but also structured tasks that help learners form mental schemas.
- Focus on cognitive strategies: summarizing, inferencing, chunking, rehearsal.

Assessment & materials

- **Assessment:** performance tasks that require information processing (summaries, short essays, controlled production tasks). Use rubrics assessing cognitive levels (Bloom).
- **Materials:** concept maps, advance organizers, worked examples, graded readings that support schema building.

Advantages

- Explains how learners generalize from input; supports explicit teaching of form and function.
- Bridges explicit instruction and learner comprehension; effective for higher cognitive goals.

Limitations

- May underplay social interaction in learning; too much emphasis on internal processes can neglect authentic communicative practice.
- Chomskyan competence/performance distinction reminds us that capacity for rules ≠ immediate fluent performance under communicative pressure (Chomsky, 1965).

3. Humanistic Approaches

Humanistic methods prioritise the learner's affective state, motivation, and whole-person development (Maslow, Rogers). In language teaching this translates into approaches that reduce anxiety, foster self-confidence, and treat learners as autonomous, creative agents. Methods in this family include Community Language Learning (CLL), Suggestopedia, Silent Way, and TPR (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

How it views language learning

Learning is optimal when emotional barriers are low and learners feel secure, valued and engaged. The teacher's role is to create facilitative conditions (counselling, relaxation, meaningful social exchange) that allow linguistic competence to emerge.

Classroom implications

- Create low-anxiety environments, use games, community building and learner reflection.
- Facilitate rather than dominate; allow learners to direct some learning choices.
- Emphasize meaningful, personally relevant input.

Assessment & materials

- **Assessment:** portfolio, self-assessment reflections, oral presentations judged on communicative intent and effort rather than strict accuracy.
- **Materials:** authentic prompts, learner journals, audio recording devices; tasks that invite personal relevance.

Advantages

- Addresses motivation and affective factors known to support learning; builds learner confidence and participation.
- Effective in initial stages to lower affective filter and build willingness to communicate.

Limitations

- Risk of insufficient focus on form; some methods criticized for lacking empirical validation (e.g., Suggestopedia).
- Demands high teacher skill in facilitation and class management.

4. Constructivism (Piaget, Bruner) — Discovery & Spiral Curriculum

Constructivism posits learners **actively construct** knowledge by assimilating new experiences into cognitive structures; learning is discovery oriented and developmental. Bruner argued for a *spiral curriculum* in which complex ideas are introduced early and revisited at increasing levels of complexity. (Piaget; Bruner).

How it views language learning

Learners build knowledge through problem solving, hypothesis testing, and reflection. Instruction should provide meaningful, engaging tasks where learners encounter and reorganize knowledge rather than simply memorize it.

Classroom implications

- Use inquiry-based learning, problem solving, project work and guided discovery tasks.
- Sequence curriculum so topics reappear with increased depth (spiral).

- Encourage learner reflection and metacognition (learning logs, peer debriefing).

Assessment & materials

- **Assessment:** project work, performance on problem tasks, explanation of reasoning (assessed via rubric).
- **Materials:** corpus examples, problem sheets, project briefs, iterative assignments that revisit core concepts.

Advantages

- Promotes deep understanding, transfer, and learner agency; students become active processors rather than passive recipients.
- Spiral sequencing supports retention and progressive complexity.

Limitations

- Discovery without guidance can be inefficient; novices often need scaffolding (guided discovery recommended).
- Requires careful design and teacher facilitation to avoid misconceptions.

5. Sociocultural / Interactionist Perspectives (Vygotsky, Long, Swain)

Learning is fundamentally **social and mediated**. Vygotsky introduced the **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)** — the gap between independent performance and performance with assistance — and emphasized mediation (tools, language, expert others) as the engine of development (Vygotsky, 1978). Interactionist theories (Long's Interaction Hypothesis; Swain's Output Hypothesis) stress negotiation of meaning and pushed output as learning opportunities.

How it views language learning

Language develops through meaningful interaction and dialogic mediation. Teacher or peer scaffolding helps learners perform just beyond their independent level and internalize new language forms. Negotiation of meaning (clarification requests, confirmation checks) creates uptake and opportunities for learning.

Classroom implications

- Design tasks that provoke negotiation: information gap, jigsaw, problem-solving tasks.
- Teach interactional strategies (how to ask for clarification, paraphrase).
- Use scaffolding techniques: modelling, prompting, fading support.

Assessment & materials

- **Assessment:** performance tasks evaluated on negotiation strategies and successful completion; teacher observes evidence of uptake (revised output following feedback).

- **Materials:** task cards, maps, realia, rubrics that include interactional criteria (clarity, repair strategies).

Advantages

- Empirically supported by SLA research; emphasizes social nature of learning and provides clear pedagogical moves (scaffold → internalize → fade).
- Works well with communicative and task-based frameworks where interaction is central.

Limitations

- Requires skillful monitoring and timely scaffold removal; large classes pose logistic challenges.
- Assessment of interactional gains can be less straightforward than discrete-point testing.

6. Complexity / Dynamic Systems & Connectionist Views

Language learning is a **complex, nonlinear** process emerging from multiple interacting factors (cognitive, social, affective). Larsen-Freeman and others view language as a dynamic system where change is variable and emergent rather than fully predictable. Connectionist models stress pattern recognition from input. (Larsen-Freeman).

Classroom implications

- Expect non-linear progress; design flexible, repeated opportunities for practice across contexts; embrace variability.
- Use rich input, multiple exemplars, tasks across modalities to let patterns emerge.

Advantages / Limitations

- Reflects real learning complexity and individual variability; encourages multiple measures and longitudinal perspective.
- Hard to operationalize into simple lesson recipes; demands reflective, data-aware teaching and longer timeframes for assessment.

Mapping Theories-Methods-Approches-Techniques

Learning Theory	Associated Methods/Approaches	Typical Techniques/Procedures
Behaviorism	Audiolingual Method (ALM)	Drills, pattern practice, repetition, mimicry, substitution tables
Cognitivism (Chomsky, Ausubel)	Structured/Direct Method, Focus-on-Form approaches	Advance organizers, explicit rule presentation, guided discovery, concept formation tasks
Humanistic Learning	Community Language Learning (CLL), Total Physical Response (TPR), Suggestopedia	Story circles, counseling techniques, TPR commands, dramatization, relaxation and music-based activities
Constructivism	Discovery Learning, Inquiry-Based Teaching, Spiral Curriculum (Bruner)	Problem-solving tasks, projects, guided hypothesis testing, learning through exploration
Sociocultural / Interactionist Theory	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)	Information-gap tasks, jigsaw activities, scaffolded dialogue, negotiation of meaning, collaborative tasks

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