METHODS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Part 1

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THEME 1: FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS AS A DISCIPLINE

1. Foreign Language Teaching Methods as a discipline

The term "methodology" refers to the knowledge base of what a foreign language teacher must know in order to function effectively. The aim of the methodology course is to develop the knowledge, the skills, the attitudes and awareness of future teachers.

Foreign language teaching methodology and second language acquisition (SLA) are two subfields of applied linguistics that are quite different in historical and research terms.
For a large part of its long history FLT relied mostly on intuitive approaches of both theoreticians and practitioners. Nowadays, language teaching draws heavily on insights that are validated by the research into the teaching process in all its complexity. The content of language teaching (e.g. *vocabulary, grammar*), its aims (e.g. *communicative competence*), its protagonists (e.g. *learners, teacher*) as well as elements of the process itself (e.g. *language learning and acquisition*, classroom interaction) have each contributed to and benefited from a number of disciplines that focus on this imortant human activity. With a recent insistence on learner and the learning process, FLT is slowly beginning to be informed by SLA, a discipline that studies language learning as a uniquely human, cognitive process and can potentially offer a better understanding of the very nature of the human mind and intelligence.
Although SLA researchers generally consider applied aspects of their research to be of secondary importance, the revelance of their findings in such areas as age constraints,crosslinguistics interaction, and the role of input etc. is undeniable.
Teaching involves a continuous analysis of one's own work, the experiences of other teachers and the search for new means to improve teaching.

The methodology of teaching English addresses several challenges or problems:
1.What to teach? That means the amount of knowledge, skills and habits that students have to obtain within the process of learning the language.
2.What are the aims of teaching? When a teacher is sure of the aim of teaching, he/she will have the easiness of reaching the intended goal.

3.How to teach? In this case one can call to mind the principles upon which teaching of English is based, the means, methods, fashion and tactics used in teaching in order to achieve the required final completion.

Task 1:
- What is the theoretical grounding of the methodology course?
- What is the subject matter of the FLT course?
- Describe and compare the perspectives of the SLA and FLT.

Task 2:

Think about what languages have traditionally been included in the foreign language programmes of school curricula. Also, think about what the goals of foreign language teaching inside and outside a formal educational institution are. At the end of this unit, come back to the questions to respond to them again.

2. Defining approach, method, technique

According to Edward Anthony's model (1965) 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.

An **approach** is a theory about language learning or even a philosophy of how people learn in general. They can be psychologically focused such as behaviorism or cognitivism. They can also be based on older philosophies such as idealism or realism.

What is an approach influenced by?
•**Theory of language***: How is language viewed?
e.g. –Structural View of Language; –Functional View of Language;

•**Theory of language learning**: How do learners learn the language?
–What are the psychological and cognitive processes involved (habit formation, induction, inferencing, generalization)?

–What are the conditions that need to be met for these learning processes to be activated?

If language is seen as a system of **structurally** related elements for the **coding** of meaning:
•What dimension of language is prioritized?
–Grammatical dimension.
•What needs to be taught?
–Phonological units. –Grammatical units and operations. –Lexical items.

If language is viewed as a vehicle for the expression of **functional meaning**:
•What dimension of language is prioritized?
–semantic and communicative dimension of language.
•What needs to be taught?
–functions, notions of language.

A **method** is an application of an approach in the context of language teaching (how to teach a language and what to teach). They are concerned with teacher and student roles, linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and meterials. They are belived to be applicable to a variety of audiences in a variety of contexts.

All methods include prescriptions for the teacher and the learners.

All methods are a pre-packaged set of specifications of how the teacher should teach and how the learner should learn derived from a particular theory of language and a theory of language learning.

For the teacher, methods prescribe what materials and activities should be used, how they should be used and what the role of the teacher should be. For learners, methods prescribe what approach to learning the learner should take and what roles the learner should adopt in the classroom.

Curriculum/syllabus (component of method): plans for carrying out a language programme. It includes linguistic and subject-matter items/objectives, sequencing, and materials to meet the needs of a group of learners in a defined context.

Technique: exercises, activities or devices used in the language classroom.

The following are some examples of techniques in error correction. 1. The teacher does not praise or criticize so that language learners learn to rely on themselves (Silent Way). 2. The teacher often praises when a student has made a good thing in learning (Audio Lingual Method). 3. When a student has produced a wrong expression, the teacher just repeats the right one (Total Physical Response). 4. The teacher does not care when a student makes an error as long as it does not hinder (delay/prevent) communication (Natural Method)

There are four theoretical **orientations** among modern foreign-language methods and approaches:

1. **STRUCTURAL/LINGUISTIC**: Based on beliefs about the structure of language and descriptive or contrastive linguistics. Involves isolation of grammatical and syntactic elements of L2 taught either deductively or inductively in a predetermined sequence. Often involves "learning about the language" in order to learn the language.

2. **COGNITIVE**: Based on theories of learning applied specifically to second language learning. Focus is on the learning strategies that are compatible with the learners own style. L2 content is selected according to concepts and techniques that facilitate generalizations about the language, memorization and "competence" leading to "performance".

3. **AFFECTIVE/INTERPERSONAL:** Focuses on the psychological and affective pre-dispositions of the learner that enhance or inhibit learning. Emphasizes interaction among and

between teacher and students and the atmosphere of the learning situation as well as students' motivation for learning. Based on concepts adapted from counseling and social psychology.

4. **FUNCTIONAL/COMMUNICATIVE**: Based on theories of language acquisition, often referred to as the "natural" approach, and on the use of language for communication. Encompasses multiple aspects of the communicative act, with language structures selected according to their utility in achieving a communicative purpose. Instruction is concerned with the input students receive, comprehension of the "message" of language and student involvement at the students' level of competence.

Interest in making the best possible choice of an approach or method, when planning a foreign language course, expresses the educator's concern with effective teaching and productive learning – though there is not a single view about what 'good' teaching is, or what it means to have learnt something.

Task 3:

In ELT situations where it is not up to the teacher to choose the approach, method or the development of the course plan, think about who is responsible for these choices.

Regardless of who those planning the course are or how they plan it, the basic question asked is: What approach, what method and what techniques should be used to get 'desirable' results? Any attempt to respond, necessarily presupposes understanding of the terms approach, method and technique.

Task 4:

Look at the following definitions, and then decide which one describes approach and which one describes method.

- _____: It is the overall "philosophy" –a set of ideas about what language teaching and learning should be about.

- _____: It is a principled set of decisions as to the object of knowledge, i.e., as to **what** is to be taught and learnt), combined with the ways in which knowledge is to be transmitted, i.e. **how** what is to be learnt is dealt with.
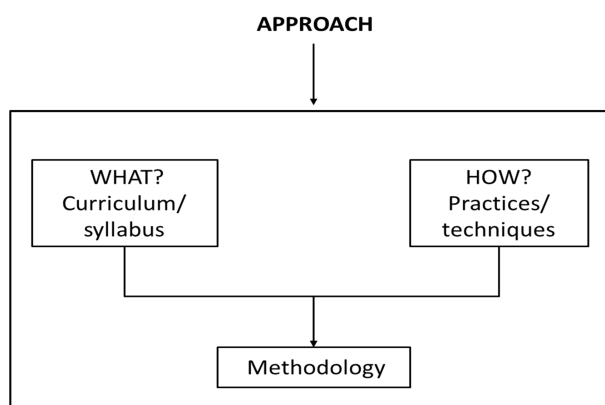
Look at the diagram in Figure 2:

Figure 2: The relationship between approach – method.

Another way of representing the relationship between approach, method and technique is more interactive, so that a specific technique, for instance, is the starting point for a method, which stems from an approach that is developed further on the basis of the teaching/learning process results.
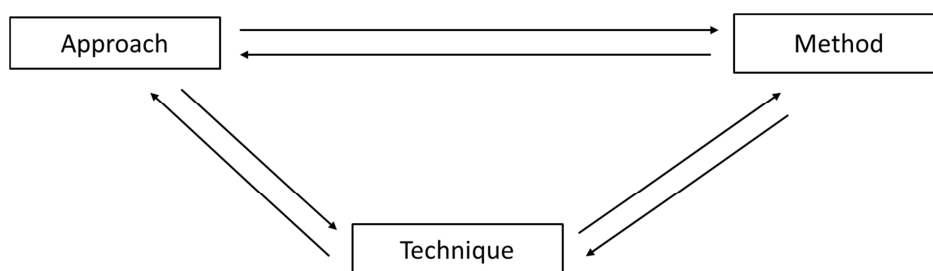

Figure 3: The relationship between approach, method and technique

3. A historical overview of FLT approaches and methods

3.1.PRE-20TH-CENTURY TRENDS: A BRIEF SURVEY

Prior to this century, language teaching methodology fluctuated between two types of approaches: one type of approach which focused on ***using a language*** (i.e., speaking and understanding), the other type which focused on ***analyzing a language*** (i.e., learning the grammatical rules).

Both the Classical Greek and Medieval Latin periods were characterized by an emphasis on teaching people to use foreign languages. The classical languages, first Greek and then Latin, were used as *lingua francas*. Higher learning was given only in these languages allover Europe. They were also used very widely in philosophy or religion, politics, and business. Thus, the educated elite became fluent speakers, readers, and writers of the appropriate classical language. We can assume that the teachers or tutors used informal and direct approaches to convey the form and meaning of the language they were teaching and that they used aural-oral techniques with no language textbooks per se, but rather a small stock of hand-copied written manuscripts of some sort, perhaps a few texts

in the target language, or crude dictionaries that listed equivalent words in two or more languages side by side.

Later during the Renaissance, the formal study of the grammars of Greek and Latin became popular through the mass production made possible by the invention of the printing press. In the case of Latin, it was discovered that the grammar of the classical texts was different from that of the Latin being used as a *lingua franca* - the latter subsequently being labeled Vulgate Latin, i.e., the Latin of the common people. Eventually major differences developed between the Classical Latin described in the Renaissance grammars, which became the formal object of instruction in schools, and the Latin being used for everyday purposes. This occurred at the same time that Latin was being abandoned as a *lingua franca,* No one was speaking Classical Latin anymore, and various European vernaculars had begun to rise in respectability and popularity.) Thus in retrospect, strange as it mayseem, the Renaissance preoccupation with the formal study of Classical Latin may have contributed to the demise of Latin as a *lingua franca* in Western Europe.

Since the European vernaculars had increased in prestige and utility, it is not surprising that people in one country or region began to find it necessary and useful to learn the language of another country or region. Thus the focus in language study shifted back to utility rather than analysis during the 17th century. Perhaps the most famous language teacher and methodologist of this period is **Jan Comenius**, a Czech, who published books about his teaching techniques between 1631 and 1658. Some of the techniques that were used and espoused were the following:

- *Use imitation instead of rules to teach a language.*
- *Have your students repeat after you.*
- *Use a limited vocabulary initially.*
- *Help your students practice reading and speaking.*
- *Teach language through pictures to make it meaningful.*

Thus, Comenius, for the first time, made explicit an inductive approach to learning a foreign language, the goal of which was to teach use rather tha n analysis of the language being taught.
Comenius's views held sway for some time; however, by the beginning of the 19th century the systematic study of the grammar of Classical Latin and of classical texts had once again taken over in schools and universities throughout Europe. The analytical grammar-translation approach became firmly entrenched, as a method for teaching not only Latin but modern languages as well. It was perhaps best codified in the work of Karl Ploetz, a German scholar, who had a tremendous influence on the language teaching profession during his lifetime and afterwards (he died in 1881).

True to form, however, the swinging of the pendulum continued. By the end of the 19th century the Direct Method, which once more stressed the ability to use rather than to analyze a language as the goal of language instruction, had been established as a viable alternative. Gouin, a Frenchman, began to publish in 1880 concerning his work with the Direct Method. He had been influenced by an older friend, the German philosopher-scientist Alexander Von Humboldt, who had expressed the following notion:
A language cannot be taught. One can only create conditions for learning to take place.

The Direct Method crossed the Atlantic in the early 20th century when de Sauze, a disciple of Gouin, came to Cleveland, Ohio in order to see to it that all foreign language instruction in the public schools there reflected the Direct Method.

De Sauze's endeavor was not completely successful (in Cleveland or elsewhere) since there were too few foreign language teachers who were fluent speakers of the language they were teaching. This later led the Modern Language Association of America to endorse the Reading Approach to language teaching, since given the skills and limitations of most language teachers, the most one could reasonably expect is that students would come away from the study of a foreign

language with an ability to read the target language with emphasis on some of the great works of literature that had been produced in the language.

The Reading Approach, as reflected in the work of Michael West (1941) and others, held sway until the 1945, when World War II once more made it imperative for the U.S. military to teach foreign language learners how to speak and understand a language quickly and efficiently. At this time, the U.S. government hired linguists to help teach languages and develop materials: The audiolingual approach, which drew heavily on structural linguistics and behavioral psychology, was born.

In Britain the same historical pressures gave rise to the Situational Approach (e.g., Pittman, '1963), which drew on Firthian Linguistics and the experience of Britain's language educators with oral approaches to foreign language teaching. The Situational Approach advocated organizing structures around situations that would provide the learner with maximum opportunity to practice the target language, with "practice" nonetheless often meaning little more than choral repetition.

3.2. 20TH-CENTURY APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE TEACHING

In addition to the Grammar-Translation Approach, the Direct Approach, the Reading Approach, Audiolingualism, and the Situational Approach - whose historical development we have now sketched out briefly - there are four other discernible approaches to foreign language teaching that have been widely used during this era, the final quarter of the 20th century. Thus, there are nine approaches altogether that will be referred to:

1. Grammar-Translation Approach
2. Direct Approach
3. Reading Approach
4. Audiolingualism (U.S.)
5. Situational Approach (Brit.)
6. Cognitive Approach
7. Affective-Humanistic Approach
8. Comprehension-Based Approach
9. Communicative Approach

1. **Grammar-Translation Approach** (an extension of the approach used to teach classical languages to the teaching of modern languages).
The grammar translation approach is an approach of teaching foreign languages derived from the classical (sometimes called traditional) method of teaching **Greek** and **Latin**. In grammar-translation classes, students learn **grammatical rules** and then apply those rules by **translating** sentences between the target language and the native language. Advanced students may be required to translate whole texts **word-for-word**. The method has two main goals: to enable students to read and **translate** literature written in the target language, and to further students' general intellectual development.

a. Instruction is given in the native language of the students.
b. There is little use of the target language.
c. Focus is on grammatical parsing, i.e., the form and inflection of words.
d. There is early reading of difficult classical texts.
e. A typical exercise is to translate sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.
f. The result of this approach is usually an inability on the part of the student to use the language for communication.

g. The teacher does not have to be able to speak the target language.

The mainstay of classroom materials for the grammar-translation approach is the textbook. Textbooks in the 19th century attempted to codify the grammar of the target language into discrete rules for students to learn and memorize. A chapter in a typical grammar-translation textbook would begin with a bilingual vocabulary list, after which there would be grammar rules for students to study and sentences for them to translate. Some typical sentences from 19th-century textbooks are as follows:

The philosopher pulled the lower jaw of the hen.
My sons have bought the mirrors of the Duke.
The cat of my aunt is more treacherous than the dog of your uncle.

Classroom teaching followed the steps below though not always in the same order.

Step 1: Each teaching unit began with the presentation of a text in the target language to be translated by students in their L1 –a text that was written to illustrate the use of the main grammar point(s) to be taught.

Step 2: Presentation by translation into L1 of all new vocabulary included in the text that students were supposed to memorize.

Step 3: Presentation of rules concerning the new grammatical phenomenon and discussed in the students' L1 by comparing and contrasting it with the rules about the phenomenon in their own language.

Step 4: Practice of the new vocabulary and grammar through exercises (filling in, translating sentences, etc.).

Step 5: Practicing by translating, this time from L1 to L2, another text illustrating the use of the new grammar and vocabulary.

Task 5: This approach developed from the teaching of classical languages (Greek and Latin). Can you understand why?

- If you have ever studied by the Grammar-Translation approach, describe the difficulties you have faced.

- Which procedures of this approach have been retained up to the present day?

- When teaching grammar, would you first give the rules and then the examples or rather the other way round?

- Where do you see the place of translation in the course of TEFL today?

2. **Direct Approach**. The direct approach of teaching was developed as a response to the Grammar-Translation approach. It sought to immerse the learner in the same way as when a first language is learnt. All teaching is done in the target language, grammar is taught inductively, there is a focus on speaking and listening, and only useful 'everyday' language is taught. The weakness in the Direct

Method is its assumption that a second language can be learnt in exactly the same way as a first, when in fact the conditions under which a second language is learnt are very different. The teacher and the students are more like partners in the teaching/learning process. Teacher/student interaction became fuller, guessing of context or content, completing fill-ins, and doing "cloze" exercises were the order of the day.

a. No use of the mother tongue is permitted (i.e., teacher does not need to know the students' native language).
b. Lessons begin with dialogues and anecdotes in modern conversational style.
c. Actions and pictures are used to make meanings clear.
d. Grammar is learned inductively.
e. Literary texts are read for pleasure and are not analyzed grammatically.
f. The target culture is also taught inductively.
g. The teacher must be a native speaker or have nativelike proficiency in the language.

Task 6:

- If you have ever studied by the Direct approach, describe the difficulties you have faced.

- Which approach stands closer to your language teaching approach: the Grammar-Translation or the Direct approach?

- How would you go about getting the meaning across? - translate the word immediately; – first use some other technique and then translate; - not translate at all;

- Which procedures of this approach have been retained up to the present day?

3. **Reading Approach** (a reaction to the impracticality of the direct approach; reading was viewed as the most usable skill to have in a foreign language since ordinary people traveled abroad around 1930; also, few teachers could use a foreign language well enough to use a direct approach in class).
a. Only the grammar useful for reading comprehension is taught.
b. Vocabulary is controlled at first (based on frequency and usefulness) and then expanded.
c. Translation is once more a respectable classroom procedure.
d. Reading comprehension is the only language skill emphasized.
e. The teacher does not need to have good oral proficiency in the target language.

Task 7:
- What are the advantages and setbacks of this approach to teaching foreign languages?

- What place should reading occupy in the contemporary classroom?

- Which procedures of this approach have been retained up to the present day?

4. **Audiolingualism** a reaction to the reading approach and its lack of emphasis on oral-aural skills; this approach became dominant in the United States during the 1940-1960s; has its roots in the USA during World War II, when there was a pressing need to train key personnel quickly and effectively in foreign language skills.

Audiolingual approach was based on the behaviourist theory of learning, which held that language, like other aspects of human activity, is a form of behaviour. In its purest form audiolingualism aims to promote mechanical habit-formation through repetition of basic patterns (drills).

a. Lessons begin with dialogues.
b. Mimicry and memorization are used, based on the assumption that language is habit formation.
c. Grammatical structures are sequenced and rules are taught inductively.
d. Skills are sequenced: listening, speaking-reading, writing postponed.
e. Pronunciation is stressed from the beginning.
f. Vocabulary is severely limited in initial stages.
g. A great effort is made to prevent learner errors.
h. Language is often manipulated without regard to meaning or context.
i. The teacher must be proficient only in the structures, vocabulary, etc. that s/he is teaching since learning activities and materials are carefully controlled.

Task 8. How far do you agree with the viewpoint expressed by the author of the excerpt?

There seems to be a widely held perception amongst language teachers that methods and approaches have finite historical boundaries - that the Grammar-Translation approach is dead, for example. Similarly, audiolingualism was in vogue in the 1960s but died out in the 70s after Chomsky's famous attack on behaviourism in language learning.

In this context, it is worth considering for a moment what goes on in the typical language learning classroom. Do you ever ask your students to repeat phrases or whole sentences, for example? Do you drill the pronunciation and intonation of utterances? Do you ever use drills? What about choral drilling? Question and answer? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then, consciously or unconsciously, you are using techniques that are features of the audiolingual approach.

2. Comment on the Bloomfield's statement: "Language learning is overlearning: anything less is of no use".

3. It is common experience that in real-life situation learners utterly fail to use the pattern which they drilled extensively just a few minutes before. Why is this so?

4. How can the monotony of drilling be diminished?

5. What are the principle drawbacks of mechanical or controlled drills and the ways of overcoming them?

- Look at the extracts from textbooks based on this approach to teaching. What is one of the striking features of the tasks?

Exercise

Look at these: **glass - glasses; book - books; housewife - housewives.**

Now look at this:

I can see some cups, but I can't see any . . . (glass).

I can see some cups, but I can't see any glasses.

Do these in the same way:

I can see some spoons, but I can't see any . . . (knife).

I can see some hammers, but I can't see any . . . (box).

I can see some coffee, but I can't see any . . . (loaf) of bread.

I can see some cupboards, but I can't see any . . . (shelf).

I can see Mr Jones and Mr Brown, but I can't see their wife.

I can see some cups, but I can't see any . . . (dish).

I can see some cars, but I can't see any . . . (bus).

Examples of Substitution Drills

1. What is it you…

don't like/ particularly dislike/ especially don't like/ hate/ like so much/ find so attractive / about whiter weather?

2. I don't like it when the weather gets ….. cold

Very/ really/ unusually/ uncomfortably/ terribly/ miserably

5. **Situational Approach** (a reaction to the reading approach and its lack of emphasis on oral-aural skills; this approach was dominant in Britain during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s; it draws much from the direct approach. It is based on a structural view of language. Speech, <u>structure</u> and a focus on a set of <u>basic vocabulary</u> are seen as the basis of language teaching. Focus on vocabulary and reading are the most salient traits of SLT. An analysis of English and a classification of its prominent grammatical structures into sentence patterns, also called situational tables, is believed to help learners internalize grammatical rules. The syllabus is designed upon a word list and structural activities.

A lesson starts with stress and intonation practice followed by a revision and a presentation of new material (mainly structures or vocabulary). The teacher then proceeds to oral practice and drilling of the elements presented. Finally, the lesson ends with reading activity or written exercises.

a. The spoken language is primary.
b. All language material is practiced orally before being presented in written form (reading and writing are taught only after an oral base in lexical and grammatical forms has been established).
c. Only the target language should be used in the classroom.
d. Efforts are made to ensure that the most general and useful lexical items are presented.
e. Grammatical structures are graded from simple to complex.
f. New items (lexical and grammatical) are introduced and practiced situationally (e.g., at the post office, at the bank, at the dinner table).

> **Task 9:**
> * What are the advantages and setbacks of this approach to teaching foreign languages?
> * Which procedures of this approach have been retained up to the present day?

6. **Cognitive Approach.** A cognitive theory of learning sees foreign language acquisition as a conscious and reasoned thinking process, involving the deliberate use of learning strategies. Learning strategies are special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning or retention of information. This explanation of language learning contrasts strongly with the behaviourist account of language learning, which sees language learning as an unconscious, automatic process.

This view leads to a classroom focus on using learning strategies that have been observed in successful language learners and to a view of the learner as an 'information-processor', with limitations as to how much new information can be retained, and who needs strategies to be able to transfer information into memory.

a. Language learning is viewed as rule acquisition, not habit formation.
b. Instruction is often individualized; learners are responsible for their own learning.
c. Grammar must be taught but it can be taught deductively (rules first, practice later) and/or inductively (rules can either be stated after practice or left as implicit information for the learners to process on their own).
d. Pronunciation is de-emphasized; perfection is viewed as unrealistic.
e. Reading and writing are once again as important as listening and speaking.
f. Vocabulary instruction is important, especially at intermediate and advanced levels.
g. Errors are viewed as inevitable, something that should be used constructively in the learning process.
h. The teacher is expected to have good general proficiency in the target language as well as an ability to analyze the target language.

Table : features of Cognitive Code learning

Yes	No
Conscious analysis	
Connection of prior to new knowledge	Memorization
Reflection	
Transformation and substitution drills	Repetition drills
Creation of hypotheses and rules	Habit-formation
Errors show the learner is learning	Errors avoided at all costs
Inductive or deductive classroom presentation	Foster rote-learning and positive habits

Task 10:
- Describe features of Cognitive approach to language teaching.
- What classroom activities reflecting the Cognitive approach are currently used?

7. **Affective-Humanist Approach** (a reaction to the general lack of affective considerations in both audiolingualism and cognitivism).
a. Respect is emphasized for the individual (each student, the teacher) and for his/her feelings.
b. Communication that is meaningful to the learner is emphasized.
c. Instruction involves much work in pairs and small groups.
d. Class atmosphere is viewed as more important than materials or methods.
e. Peer support and interaction is needed for learning.
f. Learning a foreign language is viewed as a self-realization experience.

g. The teacher is viewed as a counselor or facilitator.

h. The teacher should be proficient in the target language and the student's native language since translation may be used heavily in the initial stages to help students feel at ease; later it is gradually phased out.

Humanistic, affective, or awareness exercises… attempt to blend what students feel, think, and know with what they are learning in the target language… self-actualization and self-esteem are the ideals the exercises pursue (Moskowitz 1978:1, 2).

Humanistic exercises are more than a linguistic technique; they are a means for student and teacher alike to grow and better fulfill their potential as human beings. It is this emphasis on personal growth and personhood, beyond language mastery , that distinguishes humanisticntechniques from general communicative techniques. The emphasis on personal growth is not done at the expense of linguistic goals, rather, personal growth can enhance linguistic growth.

Task 11:
- Outline features of classroom activities underpinned by the affective-humanist approach.
- How would you characterize your language learning experience in classroom settings from the perspective of the affective-humanist approach?
- Devise an activity reflecting the affective-humanist approach.

An example is suggested below:
<div align="center">"There is more happiness in giving than in receiving."</div>

Purposes:
Affective -- To share good will and intentions with others, to promote creativity, happiness, and appreciation.
Linguistic - To express hypothetical willingness.
Levels: Intermediate-advanced
Procedures: This activity is most appropriate at the Christmas season or in the last week of a course.
The teacher should give the following directions: Imagine that you have unlimited wealth and power. You need to give a gift to your partner. To choose the best gift, you need to find out what your partner likes, dislikes, wants, or needs. Take a few moments to find out what a good gift for your partner might be. Questions you might use are:
Where would you like to travel ? Where would you like to live? What would you like to do ? What would you like to have ? What would you like to be? Next, decide on a gift. Then share the gift idea saying, "I would like to give you … " The receiver of the gift should share their feelings about the gift and express their thanks to the giver. After the exchanges are finished, form a circle and let each member share with the class who their partner was and what was given.

8. **Comprehension-Based Approach (e.g. Total Physical Response, Natural Approach)** an outgrowth of research in first language acquisition, which led some language methodologists to assume that second or foreign language learning is very similar to first language acquisition. The comprehension approach to foreign language instruction emerged in the 1970s and constituted an alternative to the dominant language-teaching paradigm of that time, which prioritized performance over reception. Based on the assumption that receptive skills, listening comprehension in particular, provided a foundation for the development of productive skills, the approach placed emphasis on intensive exposure to the target language and the resultant understanding, while also advocating that production be delayed until learners would feel ready for it. Thus it would create a nonthreatening setting where learners would not be coerced to speak prematurely and make errors in public but

could engage instead in implicit learning, whereby they would discover target language rules on their own.

a. Listening comprehension is very important and is viewed as the basic skill that will allow speaking, reading, and writing to develop spontaneously over time given the right conditions.
b. Learners should begin by listening to meaningful speech and by responding nonverbally in meaningful ways before they produce any language themselves.
c. Learners should not speak until they feel ready to do so; this results in better pronunciation than when the learner is forced to speak immediately,
d. Learners progress by being exposed to meaningful input that is just one step beyond their level of competence.
e. Rule learning may help learners monitor (or become aware of) what they do, but it will not aid their acquisition or spontaneous use of the target language.
f. Error correction is seen as unnecessary and perhaps even counterproductive; the important thing is that the learners can understand and can make themselves understood. g. If the teacher is not a native speaker (or near-native), appropriate materials such as audiotapes and videotapes must be available to provide the appropriate input for the learners.

Comprehension-based language teaching uses many hours of listening activities in the early stages of acquisition, and learners respond with TPR-style tasks as well as other nonverbal signs of comprehension.

The listening activities dominate classroom time, followed much later by the other receptive skill of reading, small amounts of speaking, and even smaller amounts of writing.

A typical class session after the prolonged listening period might consist of reading a short text and underlining the best of several paraphrases of the main idea. This might be followed by a problem solving activity related to the topic of the reading (problem solving is especially valued in comprehension based learning) and a question-answer session at the end of the hour, possibly in the learners' native language.

Even after the listening stage is completed, physical activities continue to be part of the lessons. The activities are still centered on readings or spoken texts, and the curriculum moves into pantomime and role playing to show more abstract concepts.

9. **Communicative Approach** (grew out of the work of anthropological linguists (e.g., Hymes, 1972) and Firthian linguists (e.g., Halliday, 1973), who view language first and foremost as a system for communication).
a. It is assumed that the goal of language teaching is learner ability to communicate in the target language.
b. It is assumed that the content of a language course will include semantic notions and social functions, not just linguistic structures.
c. Students regularly work in groups or pairs to transfer (and, if necessary, negotiate) meaning in situations where one person has information that the other(s) lack.
d. Students often engage in role-play or dramatization to adjust their use of the target language to different social contexts.
e. Classroom materials and activities are often authentic to reflect real-life situations and demands.

f. Skills are integrated from the beginning; a given activity might involve reading, speaking, listening, and perhaps also writing (this assumes the learners are educated and literate).
g. The teacher's role is primarily to facilitate communication and only secondarily to correct errors.
h. The teacher should be able to use the target language fluently and appropriately.

To sum up, we can see that certain features of several of the first five approaches outlined above arose in reaction to perceived inadequacies or impracticalities in an earlier approach or approaches. The four more recently developed approaches also do this to some extent; however, each one is grounded on a slightly different theory or view of how people learn second or foreign languages, or how people use languages, and each has a central point around which everything else revolves:

Cognitive Approach: Language is rule-governed cognitive behavior (not habit formation).
Affective-Humanistic Approach: Learning a foreign language is a process of self-realization and of relating to other people.
Comprehension Approach: Language acquisition occurs if and only if the learner comprehends meaningful input.
Communicative Approach: The purpose of language (and thus the goal of language teaching) is communication.

These four more recent approaches are not necessarily in conflict or totally incompatible since it is not impossible to conceive of an integrated approach which would include attention to rule formation, affect, comprehension, and communication and which would view the learner as someone who thinks, feels, understands, and has something to say, In fact, many teachers would find such an approach, if well conceived and well integrated, to be very attractive.

THEME 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FLT FIELD.
SOME INNIOVATIVE METHODOLOGIES OF THE 1970S

1. The Silent Way
2. Suggestopedia
3. Total Physical Response
4. The Natural Approach
5. The Post- Method Era

Insights from Psychology are at the basis of a number of approaches that made their appearance in the 70s and the 80s, primarily in the U.S. Despite their promotion in language teaching and pedagogy journals and books, they were never immensely influential in Europe and did not contribute particularly to the growth of the language teaching industry, though some of their ideas and techniques have been used eclectically. These are: The Silent Way, Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, The Natural Approach.

1. The Silent Way

The Silent Way is the name of a method of language teaching devised by Caleb Gattegno. It is based on the premise that the <u>teacher should be silent as much as possible in the classroom but the learner should be encouraged to produce as much language as possible</u>.
The Silent Way is characterized by its focus on discovery, creativity, problem solving and the use of accompanying materials. Richards and Rodgers (1986:99) summarized the method into three major features.
1. Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates. The Silent way belongs to the tradition of teaching that favors hypothetical mode of teaching in which the teacher and the learner work cooperatively to reach the educational desired goals. The learner is not a bench bound listener but an active contributor to the learning process.
2. Learning is facilitated by accompanying (mediating) physical objects. The Silent Way uses colorful charts and rods (cuisenaire rods) which are of varying length. They are used to introduce vocabulary (colors, numbers, adjectives, verbs) and syntax (tense, comparatives, plurals, word order)
3. Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned. This can be summarized by Benjamin Franklin's words:
"Tell me and I forget
Teach me and I remember
Involve me and I learn"
A good silent way learner is a good problem solver. The teacher's role resides only in giving minimum repetitions and correction, remaining silent most of the times, leaving the learner struggling to solve problems about the language and get a grasp of its mechanism.

2. Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia is a method developed by the Bulgarian psychiatrist-educator Georgi Lozanov. The most conspicuous characteristics of Suggestopedia are the decoration, furniture, and arrangement of the classroom, the use of music, and the authoritative behavior of the teacher. The claims for

suggestopedic learning are dramatic. "Memorization in learning by the suggestopedic method seems to be accelerated 25 times over that in learning by conventional methods" (Lozanov 1978: 27).

The objectives of Suggestopedia are to deliver advanced conversational proficiency quickly. It bases its learning claims on student mastery of prodigious lists of vocabulary pairs. A Suggestopedia course lasts 30 days and consists of ten units of study. Classes are held 4 hours a day, 6 days a week. The central focus of each unit is a dialogue consisting of 1,200 words or so, with an accompanying vocabulary list and grammatical commentary. The dialogues are graded
by lexis and grammar.

On the first day of work on a new unit the teacher discusses the general content (not structure) of the unit dialogue. The learners then receive the printed dialogue with a native language translation in a parallel column. The teacher answers any questions of interest or concern about the dialogue. The dialogue then is read a second and third time in ways to be discussed subsequently. This is the
work for day 1. Days 2 and 3 are spent in primary and secondary elaboration of the text. Primary elaboration consists of imitation, question and answer, reading, and so on, of the dialogue and of working with the 150 new vocabulary items presented in the unit. The secondary elaboration involves encouraging students to make new combinations and productions based on the dialogues. A story or essay paralleling the dialogue is also read. The students engage in conversation and take small roles in response to the text read.

Lozanov comments on the procedure of his session:

At the beginning of the session, all conversation stops for a minute or two, and the teacher listens to the music coming from a tape-recorder. He waits and listens to several passages in order to enter into the mood of the music and then begins to read or recite the new text, his voice modulated in harmony with the musical phrases. The students follow the text in their textbooks where each lesson is translated into the mother tongue. Between the first and second part of the concert, there are several minutes of solemn silence. In some cases, even longer pauses can be given to permit the students to stir a little. Before the beginning of the second part of the concert, there are again several minutes of silence and some phrases of the music are heard again before the teacher begins to read the text. Now the students close their textbooks and listen to the teacher's reading. At the end, the students silently leave the room. They are not told to do any homework on the lesson they have just had except for reading it cursorily once before going to bed and again before getting up in the morning. (Lozanov 1978: 272)

Table : Features of Suggestopedia

Focus on unconscious learning
When relaxed, learners are capable of incredible feats
Use of yoga techniques to facilitate relaxation and concentration
Activation of the left brain to foster holistic learning through music
Language: L1-L2 pairs
Use of translation and memorisation
Oral input before output
Interactive activities

Task: Enumerate the features of the Silent Way and Suggestopedia and select those you think you would incorporate in your teaching approach.

3. Total Physical Response

Asher, J.C. (1979). **Learning Another Language Through Actions**. San Jose, California: AccuPrint.

James J. Asher defines the Total Physical Response (TPR) method as one that combines information and skills through the use of the kinesthetic sensory system. This combination of skills allows the student to assimilate information and skills at a rapid rate. As a result, this success leads to a high degree of motivation. The basic tenets are:

Understanding the spoken language before developing the skills of speaking. Imperatives are the main structures to transfer or communicate information. The student is not forced to speak, but is allowed an individual readiness period and allowed to spontaneously begin to speak when the student feels comfortable and confident in understanding and producing the utterances.

Classroom procedure:

Step I The teacher says the commands as he himself performs the action.

Step 2 The teacher says the command as both the teacher and the students then perform the action.

Step 3 The teacher says the command but only students perform the action

Step 4 The teacher tells one student at a time to do commands

Step 5 The roles of teacher and student are reversed. Students give commands to teacher and to other students.

Step 6 The teacher and student allow for command expansion or produces new sentences.

4. The Natural Approach

Source: Krashen, S.D. , & Terrell, T.D. (1983). The Natural Approach. Hayward, CA: The Alemany Press.

Krashen (1985; Dulay Burt and Krashen, 1982) studied the conditions underlying all successful language acquisition, mainly based on the way children learn their first language, proposing the Monitor Theory, at the source of the classroom method. This model consists of five hypotheses:

1. Acquisition versus learning hypothesis
There are two different ways to 'learn' a language: a subconscious process, natural, identical to the one children learning their mother tongue use, and effective –acquisition-, and a second process –learning-, which is conscious and consists of learning grammar rules.
2. Natural Order hypothesis
Second language rules are acquired in a fixed way, pre-established, determined by innate mechanisms and not by linguistic complexity or explicit teaching.
3. Monitor Hypothesis
The monitor only controls learning, not acquisition. The monitor plans, edits and corrects the learner's production when there is time. It sometimes interferes with the process of acquisition.
4. Input Hypothesis
It explains how language is acquired. A second language is acquired processing comprehensible input, that is, input that has been listened to and understood. If that input is beyond the level of the student and he/she does not understand it, then that input is useless. For acquisition to take place the input has to be slightly superior to the level of the learner (i+1) and comprehensible. To achieve comprehension, the learner can use some help, through the context, pictures, mime, etc. To achieve acquisition the learner must use innate mechanisms (LAD), triggered when input is heard and understood.
5. Affective filter Hypothesis

It considers the role in acquisition of several factors, such as motivation, self-confidence or anxiety. These factors foster or impede acquisition, though they do not produce acquisition. To be more concrete, lack of motivation or self-esteem can raise the affective filter

Krashen's Monitor Theory constitutes the theoretical background of this method, together with Terrell's school experience (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). The Natural approach considers language as communication, so meaning, rather than grammar, is at the core of their notion of language. Thus, the focus is not on explicit analysis of structures either by the teacher or learner. Following the notion that the process of learning a second language should be similar to the way children learn their mother tongue, comprehensible input is provided using visual and kinaesthetic aids, and students are not asked to produce output immediately, as they usually go through a silent period in which they understand but are not able to use the target language, in a way similar to L1 learners.

There are several types of *activities* introduced in the lessons:
-Affective humanistic activities, intended to reduce the learners' affective filter and involve their feelings, ideas and experiences, such as dialogues, interviews, preference ranking, personal charts, etc.
-Problem-solving activities, in which students have to find a correct answer to a situation or problem.
-Games, considered as an important element in the acquisition process and not as a way to fill up students' lessons.
-Content activities, which focus on learning something else besides language, including mathematics, science, etc., for example, music, films, television reports, news broadcasts, and the like.

Table : features of the Natural approach

Yes	No
Meaning, rather than form	Analysis of syntactic structures
Unconscious acquisition, rather than learning	
Comprehensible input	Drills
Games, problem-solving and affective activities	Stressful situations
Silent period	Repetition and immediate production
Input before output	
Authentic activities	

Task 1:

a) Summarise the features of the Natural Approach.
b) Which procedures of this approach are still used in the classroom? What are their advantages?
c) Krashen (1985) put forward the Monitor Hypothesis. Does the Natural approach represent a faithful classroom implementation?
d) Compare the features of the Natural approach to those of TPR. Enumerate similarities and differences.
e) Have you experienced any of these techniques as a learner? Would you use them as a teacher?

Task 2:

Produce a chart that shows how the different ways of thinking about language learning are enacted. Put into categories the methods and approaches that have been briefly presented to you so far.

5. The Post- Method Era

The history of language teaching in the last one hundred years has been characterized by a search for more effective ways of teaching second or foreign language. That search was for a **single, ideal method, generalizable across widely varying audiences**, that would successfully teach students a foreign language in the classroom. One result of this trend was the era of so called designer or brand- name methods, that is, packaged solutions that can be described and marketed for use anywhere in the world. Thus, the Direct Methods was enthusiastically embraced in the early part of the twentieth century as an improvement over Grammar Translation. In the 1950s the Audiolingual Methods began to fade in the 1970s, particularly in the United States, a variety of guru- led methods emerged to fill the vacuum created by the discrediting of Audiolingualism, such as the Silent Way, Total Physical Response, and Suggestopedia. While these had declined substantially by the 1990s, new "breakthrough" continues to be announced from time to time, such as Task-Based Instruction, Neurolinguistic Programming, and Multiple Intelliegences, and these attract varying level of support. Mainstream language teaching on both sides of the Atlantic, however, opted, for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the recommended basis for language teaching methodology in the 1980s and it continues to be considered the most plausible basis for language teaching today, although CLT is today understood to mean little more than a set of vary general principles that can be applied and interpreted in a variety of ways".

Yet the notion of methods came under criticism in the 1990s, and a number of limitations implicit in the notion of all purpose methods were raised. By the end of the twentieth century, mainstream language teaching no longer regarded methods as the key factor in accounting for success or failure in language teaching. Some spoke of the death of methods and approaches and the term" post-methods era" was sometimes used. In other words, in this era, teacher and teacher trainees don't discuss or focus about certain methods anymore.

Why are methods no longer the milestones of language teaching? Some of the reasons are as follows:
1. Methods are too prescriptive, assuming too much about a context before the context has even been identified. They are therefore overgeneralized in their potential application to practical situations.
2. Generally, methods are quite distinctive at the early, beginning stages of a language course and rather indistinguishable from each other at later stages. In the first few days of a Community Language Learning class, for example, the students witness a unique set of experiences in their small circles of translated language whispered in their ears. But, within a matter of weeks, such classrooms can look like any other learner-centered curriculum.
3. It was once thought that methods could be empirically tested by scientific quantification to determine which one is "best." We have now discovered that something as artful and intuitive as language pedagogy cannot ever be so clearly verified by empirical validation.
4. Methods are laden with what Pennycook (1989) referred to as "interested knowledge" – the quasi-political or mercenary agendas of their proponents. Recent work in the power and politics of English language teaching has demonstrated that methods, often the creations of the powerful "center," become vehicles of a "linguistic imperialism" (Phillipson, 1992) targeting the disempowered periphery.
David Nunan (1991, p. 228) summed it up nicely:

It has been realised that there never was and probably never will be a method for all, and the focus in recent years has been on the development of classroom tasks and activities which are consonant with what we know about second language acquisition, and which are also in keeping with the dynamics of the classroom itself.

Task 3:

Look at a list of statements below, which are informed by politicized views of foreign language didactics and decide whether you can think of any additional arguments to the same effect.

- Basic elements of methods considered as totally new and exciting or others that totally overturn ways of thinking have been around for hundreds of years. In essence methods represent different configurations of the same basic options.

- Trend and fashion in methods and approaches or why some become more widespread and popular than others, is due to a variety of factors which have little to do with the quality of the method itself.

- While new methods and approaches of teaching and learning a language have often been viewed and promoted as a better way of teaching and learning a language, very little or no serious and systematic, longitudinal research is ever carried out to provide proof as to the effectiveness of one method over another.

- The few comparative studies of methods that have been carried out have been unable to reach any definite conclusions as to whether one method is superior to any other.

- Methods for language teaching and learning are not always theoretically well informed. Most often, they comprise language teaching recipes ready for consumption by theoretically uninformed and ill prepared language teachers.

- Methods are usually developed in the West and have everything to do with the cultural politics of language of countries such as the U.S., England, France and Germany.

- New methods and approaches (which are produced in the intellectual marketplace of dominant countries in order to be exported) are always presented as advanced and effective, regardless of the specific educational, social and cultural contexts of the users of these products or their values and beliefs.

- There is, however, another line of argument (Dendrinos 1992), which is not politically uninformed. The argument focuses around the claim that different approaches to teaching and learning provide the ground for different pedagogic and social practices that contribute differently to the development the social identity of the learner as well as to the construal of a different learner identity.

THEME 3: COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING PEDAGOGY

1. Claims of the Communicative Approach and its characteristics
2. Basic characteristics of 'communicative teaching'
3. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

1. Claims of the Communicative Approach and its characteristics

The main distinguishing feature of the Communicative Approach is that it aims at the development of **communicative competence** by focusing not only on form and meaning but also on language use, and on skills which are required for the comprehension and production of authentic oral and written texts. It relies on **semantic syllabi** (often Notional/Functional) rather than structural ones or, in any case, syllabi that may list grammatical and vocabulary categories but also language functions. In the best of cases '**communicative' syllabi** contain interrelated categories of grammar (formal or semantic grammar), vocabulary, language functions, situational contexts, areas of discourse (topic); in other words, they tend to relate form and meaning to **social contexts of language use**.

The concern of the Communicative Approach, about how language is used not only correctly but also **appropriately**, resulted in a basic question about the knowledge to be transmitted and acquired in FL courses: Which uses of language (i.e., functions, topics, situations) does one select to include in the course syllabus? The most obvious answer to this question was: The uses that learners are most likely to be involved in outside the classroom, in the 'real' world. It was this response that facilitated a turn of attention from the language (what elements should be taught / acquired and how) to the *learner* and his or her **communicative needs**. Such interest pointed to new ideas regarding teaching practices in the 'communicative' classroom, so that even though the Communicative Approach does not constitute a teaching/learning methodology, the claims it is based upon have resulted to a series of principled pedagogic practices and instructional activities.

Underlying claims:

1.1 Communication is a process involving unpredictability

Communication is an exchange between people; that is, exchange of knowledge, information, ideas, opinions and feelings. It is certainly not always an exchange of well-ordered utterances. Communication is full of surprises. It is this element of unexpectedness and unpredictability that makes communication what it is. The cases where responses are predictable are a very small number of special situations, i.e., in the case of social formulae (such as: 'How do you do', My 'condolences', 'Please give my regards to your parents') that serve to establish or maintain relations between speakers rather than to convey information. In most cases, however, responses are completely unpredictable. For example, a question such as 'Did you watch the games?' could produce any of the following responses: 'You bet we did and got no sleep afterwards', or 'Oh, have you heard about Mary trying out for the basketball team?' or 'Oh, that reminds me… I wanted to tell

you to go see the film 'The Final Match'. It's excellent!' The Communicative Approach aims at preparing learners for this sort of interaction which had often been ignored in language teaching.

FL courses before the Communicative Approach were mainly concerned with either the formation of language habits or the development of linguistic competence which would allow students of a foreign language to produce well-formed sentences. Little or no attention was given to the development of **communicative skills.** Stimulus/response drills, dialogues and question-answer exercises encouraged students to think that any given question or remark has a set reply. Although this type of classroom practice could prove valuable in some ways, it is a means to an end rather than an end in itself, and the transfer to real life is not automatic: intermediate processes are required.

1.2 Communication involves more than the exchange of ideas

Language is not used merely so as to convey ideas, news and information but also so as to relate feelings, attitudes and opinions about them. To give a simple example: If someone says *"It's raining"*, the person s/he is addressing may show surprise, frustration, satisfaction, concern. In order to convey his/her feelings, the respondent may use verbal but also non-verbal cues. Attitudes and feelings are expressed with language but also with intonation, gesture and facial expression. In fact, meanings which are socially meaningful are conveyed through language but also through other paralinguistic and non-linguistic devices such as bodily contact, physical proximity, orientation, bodily posture, gesture, head-nods, facial expressions, eye-movement and even appearance; they are also conveyed through the speed at which a person speaks, the loudness or softness, the quality and pitch of his/her voice.

The Communicative Approach claims that foreign language learners must learn to communicate meanings with language and paralanguage not just to produce sentences and sentences combined to form socially decontextualized texts. They must become able to understand and convey ideational but also affective and attitudinal information, which means that verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication should interrelate in a teaching program.

1.3 Communication presupposes communicative competence

In order to communicate effectively users need not merely linguistic competence which allows them to understand and produce grammatically correct sentences but utterances and larger texts articulated in language appropriate to the situational context. This is because language does not occur in isolation; it occurs in a social context and fulfils social rather than linguistic purposes. Children acquiring their first language develop knowledge related to the form and meaning (in other words, they come to intuitively know rules about what is grammatically correct) but also related to the use of language (they come to intuitively know rules about what is **appropriate to the social context** of language use). They develop **communicative competence** which includes both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. There are many ways of saying the same thing, and we choose one rather than another according to the criterion of social context 'appropriateness'. Sit down and open your book is a perfectly correct sentence, from a grammatico-syntactical point of view, but it would be socially incorrect (i.e., inappropriate) if it were said by a student to his or her teacher. Likewise, "Would you be so kind as to open your books to page 5, that is if you don't mind" is perfectly

correct English, but it would not be an inappropriate way for a teacher to speak to his or her students. "Two hundred people killed in plane crash" would be a grammatically incorrect sentence, because there is no verb (it should actually read as "Two hundred people <u>were</u> killed in plane crash") but it would be an absolutely correct utterance as a newspaper article title.

The development of communicative competence requires that teachers must do more than offer the learner knowledge about how the linguistic system operates and opportunities to practice making grammatically correct but socially decontextualized sentences, texts and dialogues. FL teachers and the instructional materials they use must demonstrate how language elements are used, and in what situational context they are appropriate. In short, foreign language learners have to master knowledge and skills related to language usage but also to its use.

1.4 'Knowing how to' and 'being able to' is not enough

People may know that such and such a way of saying or writing something is correct and appropriate, but they may be unable to put their knowledge into practice. Or, they may have developed communicative competence and skills, but when involved in a communicative event they may be unable to perform in ways that result to effective communication. The crucial question that 'communicative' foreign language teaching asks is how competence leads to performance or how to make a smooth transition between 'skill-getting' and 'skill-using'. The gap is difficult to bridge because the classroom environment, by its very nature, makes genuine communication extremely elusive, i.e., communication stems from necessity, and this element is usually absent in a classroom situation. In most cases, learners know in advance what that will say and what everybody else will say too. If a teacher gives a prompt to student A such as: "Ask what Alex was doing yesterday", everybody in the class knows that the correct response is: "What was Alex doing yesterday?". And if student B is asked to respond to A's question on the basis of a picture showing a girl playing the piano, everyone in the class knows that the response should be: "She was playing the piano". Teachers usually ask questions to which they (and perhaps other students in the class) already know the answer either because it's in an instructional text or because it is obvious. For example, the teacher may ask "George, am I writing on the blackboard right now?". Interested in formal grammar, s/he is practicing the present progressive and expects to hear: "No, you are not writing on the blackboard right now. You are looking in your book". Nobody is exchanging any information and consequently nobody really needs to listen to what is being said. The element of choice and surprise that is so characteristic of communication has been missing from the foreign language classroom.

Communicative teaching wants to compensate for that which had been missing. It claims that necessity, in the form of doubt, of unpredictability can be created through *information-gap* activities. That is, activities where the class participants have only part of the total information or where the person doing the asking (including the teacher) may not have the information at all, and is motivated through the type of activity to provide accurate information in appropriate ways. For example, students are asked to give instructions to the class divided in groups to create an object that they know how to. The group that finishes their construction first win and the student that has been able to give correct and appropriate instructions gains a point too.

1.5 In real communication errors are inevitable

Developing communicative competence means a reassessment of teachers' (and learners') attitudes towards errors. Errors of all sorts are common in different kinds of communicative situations between people and whereas some errors of language use may result in ineffective communication or in endangering relationships between people, errors of usage (errors in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary) are unlikely to. Many errors that people (even L1 users) make – errors of usage or use – are corrected by the speaker him/herself in the process of communication. Otherwise, they may be compensated for. In real communication, particularly in oral communication, all kinds of errors, mistakes, lapses, ungrammaticalities, hesitations, stuttering, unfinished sentences and the like are extremely common.

The Communicative Approach takes all the above into account, and adopts the stance that learners should be allowed to make errors as part of the language learning process. In answer to questions raised regarding the extent and kind of errors that should go uncorrected, the response is that it depends on the pedagogic goal each time but generally speaking the types of errors corrected are those that impede communication. It is not necessary to stamp out immediately every grammatical, lexical or pronunciation error made, thinking that if they are not learners will develop bad habits impossible to get rid of later. It considers errors as a necessary part of the learner's progress towards the mastery of the language and that errors will right themselves in the normal process of things, as the learner receives more information. It maintains that learners must be given the opportunity to test out a new language element (word, structure, function, etc.) so they can find out what the boundaries of its use are. Therefore, they should be given the opportunity to make them. This does not mean that linguistic or pragmatic errors should not be corrected at any time, but it need be done with special care, and not necessarily on the spot. Emphasis on correct production all the time can lead to serious inhibitions on the part of the learner.

Task 1:

Having read the above about 'communicative' teaching, decide whether there would be anything you would change in the definitions of the notions below (cf. Richards, Platt and Weber (1987:108).

Fluency: It refers to the ability to produce written and/or spoken language with ease but some inevitable errors, mistakes or hesitations. It also means being able to communicate ideas, feelings and opinions effectively, in continuous speech, without causing comprehension difficulties or communication breakdown.

Accuracy: It refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak or write fluently, or the competence to produce language appropriate to the context of situation.

Appropriacy: It refers to the use of language in a way which is appropriate for the context of situation.

Task 2:

Now read the characteristics of the Communicative Approach as described in the subsection below, and then read the statements about foreign language teachers and teaching in Table 1 that follows. Decide whether they respond to principles of the Communicative Approach.

2. Basic characteristics of 'communicative teaching'

- The goal of teaching/learning is the development of learners' communicative competence. Therefore, it concentrates on use and appropriacy rather than on usage and correct grammatical forms and vocabulary.

- A tendency to favour fluency-focused activities rather than simply accuracy-focused activities.

- The C.A. concentrates on the development of receptive and productive skills separately. For example, it offers opportunities for listening comprehension with activities that do not require production, such as someone giving directions to get someplace and learners trace the route on a map. However, it also concentrates on the development of receptive and productive skills in an integrated fashion. Therefore, they are given a text that presents the problem a young man is facing and they are asked to read it and suggest to him ways of dealing with his problem. Or they are asked to write an e-mail to him to help him with his problem. Speaking or writing is integrated with reading.

- Language practice, which moves from highly controlled activities to progressively freer ones, is not limited to the understanding and production of dexontextualized structures but contextualized utterances and socially purposeful texts.

- The notion of error is not restricted to incorrect grammar or choice of vocabulary but it is extended to include errors of appropriacy. Furthermore, committing errors are not considered as capital offenses but as part of the learning and the communicative process.

- The focus is on meaningful interaction between learners, on pair and group work activities where learners have the feeling that there is some purpose for communicating.

- In order for activities to involve learners in real communication and to be meaningful for learners they must entail some information gaps.

- Aiming at learners' fluency in the target language, as well as at developing their ability to deal with real, everyday communication through that language, communicative activities for pedagogic practice must relate in some way to learners' real-life needs and social contexts.

- Texts used for listening and reading practice should be authentic or authentic-like and so must the activities which are based on them.

- Activities for writing or speaking production are often set up as role plays or simulations where the learner knows who is talking/writing to whom and for what purpose. Determining the communicative parameters for any language production is a necessary part of practicing and assessing appropriateness of language choices.

Table 1: Statements about teachers and teaching.	Yes	No
• The teacher is the facilitator of the communication process, a needs analyst and a		

guide to the learning process.		
• Students are expected to master the linguistic system through the controlled practice of grammar and vocabulary. • Linguistic and text variation is an important feature of instructional materials.		
• Communication is not encouraged from the very beginning. It is encouraged when users can produce correctly. • Teaching aims at native-speaker phonological competence. • Attends to structure/form and decontextualized meaning rather than to contextualized meaning and use.		
• The target linguistic system will be learnt best through the process of struggling to communicate.		
• The use of the students' L1 is forbidden.		
• Social contextualisation is a basic premise for the presentation, practice and production of language.		
• Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal; accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context.		

Task 3:

Now that you have read about the communicative approach and looked at the activities in Appendix 1, read the information in Table 2 below, and decide if there are any other features you would include in the two columns.

Table 2: Features of instructional activities.

Non-communicative activities	Communicative activities
• They serve the purpose of showing to the teacher) what students have learned • They may motivate classroom rather than social interaction • They focus on practicing linguistic form rather than the use of language • They are usually constructed (especially at initial stages of language teaching) to offer practice opportunity for a specific linguistic structure • They often require teacher intervention (e.g., there is a correct response to an answer and the teacher has the right answer plus the knowledge so as to say if	• They… • They… • They… • They… • They… • They…

performance was accurate or not). • They give opportunities for controlled practice but not guided free production.	

Task 4:

Table 3 that follows includes characteristics of two different approaches. One is the Audiolingual Approach briefly discussed in an earlier Unit and the other is the Communicative Approach presented in detail in this Unit. Read the characteristics and decide:

- Which is which
- Use the knowledge you have developed so far to fill in the missing information in the two columns.

Table 3: Audiolingual Approach and Communicative Approach

……………………. approach	……………………approach
Structure based dialogues are memorized	Meaning is paramount Dialogues, if used, center around communicative functions and are not normally memorised
Language items are not contextualised Language learning is learning structures, words, sounds Mastery of the formal system is taught	Language learning is learning to communicate Effective and appropriate communication is sought
Grammatical explanation is avoided	Comprehensible pronunciation is taught Any device which assists learners is accepted
Communicative activities may come only after a long process of drilling, repetition Reading and writing are deferred until speech is mastered	Translation may be used where students need or benefit from it All language skills are developed from the beginning
The target language system will be learnt through the overt teaching of the patterns of the language	
Linguistic competence is the desired goal Varieties of language are recognized but not emphasised	Communicative competence is the desired goal

"Language is habit" so error must be prevented at all costs	Language is created by the individual through trial and error
Accuracy, in terms of formal correctness, is a primary goal	
	Students are expected to interact with other people through pair and group work or through their writing
The teacher cannot know exactly what language the students will use	
Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated in the language	

3. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

What is Task-Based Language Teaching?

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is a type of instruction that relies on the use of authentic target language to do meaningful tasks. TBLT is also referred to as task-based instruction (TBI) and can be considered a branch of communicative language teaching (CLT). The notion of tasks is central to this type of instruction. The assessment of learning is mainly based on task outcome and not only on the accurate use of the target language. For this reason, TBLT is believed to be effective in learning target language fluency and developing student confidence.

Theoretical foundations

The following are some of the most important theoretical premises of TBL according to Richards & Rodgers (2001, p. 227-229).

Theory of language

- Language is primarily a means of making meaning: TBLT considers meaning as a central focal point in language teaching. The approach is concerned with the outcome of tasks.
- Multiple models of language inform task-based instruction: Structural, functional and interactional models influence TBLT adherents.
- Lexical units are central in language use and language learning: TBLT considers vocabulary items to include not only individual words but also phrases, sentence frames, collocations and prefabricated routines.
- "Conversation" is the central focus of language and the keystone of language acquisition: Learners are required to produce and understand communicative messages. That is exchanging information is crucial to language acquisition.

Theory of learning

- Tasks provide both the input and output processing necessary for language acquisition: If Krashen stresses the importance of comprehensible input, TBLT advocates have argued that comprehensible output is also of equal importance.
- Task activity and achievement are motivational: Tasks appeal to learners' learning styles and may involve physical activity, collaboration, and partnership.
- Learning difficulty can be negotiated and fine-tuned for a particular pedagogical purpose: Tasks may be designed in such a way that they meet learners' level of proficiency. That is, providing the appropriate target input is crucial to facilitate language acquisition.

As it is evident from the above theoretical premises, the notion of task is central to TBLT.

What is a task?

An activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process is regarded as a task (Prabhu, 1987:24).

Examples of tasks include:

- Preparing a meal.
- Ordering food in a restaurant.
- Making an appointment with a doctor on the phone.
- Solving a problem.
- Designing a brochure.
- Making a list of the qualities of a good husband/wife.

Criteria for tasks in TBLT

Rod Ellis defines tasks in terms of four key criteria:

1. Meaning

Tasks are language teaching activities where meaning is central. Tasks require learners to produce and understand communicative messages.

2. Gaps

Tasks should involve gaps. There are three types of gaps:

1. **Information gap**: one person has information that another person does not have.
2. **Opinion gap**: learners have the same shared information but they use that information to try to convey their feeling about a particular situation.
3. **Reasoning gap**: learners are asked to use reason and logic to decide what information to convey and what resolution to make for the problem at hand. Like information gap, the activity necessarily involves understanding and communicating information. Where the

information and reasoning gaps differ is in the information conveyed. The latter is not identical with the one initially understood. It changes through reasoning.

3. Use of learners' own resources

Learners have to use their own linguistic and nonlinguistic resources to complete the task. That is, they have to use whatever knowledge of the language they have in order to participate in the task. Learners may also use nonlinguistic resources such as gestures. This criterion is what makes TBLT unique. In traditional language teaching, the teacher provides the language resources and the students have to master these resources when they do a task. They are not asked to produce communicative messages using their own linguistic resources.

4. Communicative outcome

Tasks must involve some sort of nonlinguistic outcome such as drawing a route on a map or agreeing on a plan to solve the problem of pollution in the learners' neighborhood.

Typical procedure

Pre-task

At this stage, the topic is introduced through activities such as:

- Prior knowledge activation
- Brainstorming
- Visual Aids
- Games
- Discussions
- Vocabulary activities
- Reading

Task activity (cycle)

The teacher gives clear instructions about the task.

- The learners do the task, in pairs or in groups, using their own linguistic and nonlinguistic resources.
- The teacher's role at this stage is to monitor, support, and encourage the learners.
- The teacher does not have to intervene to correct accuracy mistakes.
- The emphasis is more on meaningful communication, fluency and confidence building than on accuracy.
- The learners draft or rehearse what they want to say or write.
- They report briefly to the whole class to compare findings.

Post-task

This stage provides an opportunity for learners to compare their products with a similar product by a native/ fluent speaker.

- The learners listen to a recording by a native/fluent speaker.
- Comparison between the two versions constitutes a chance for learners to learn from their mistakes.
- Based on the analysis of the learners' products, more work on specific language points may follow

Advantages of TBLT

Implicit learning

The aim of TBLT is to help learners develop implicit knowledge of the language that will enable them to participate easily and naturally in communication. The learners get the form and use of the target language without being explicitly being taught. The role of the teacher is to design tasks by replicating and creating the conditions for language learning and for communication that exists outside the confines of the classroom. The aim is that the learners' interlanguage will gain implicit language knowledge while doing tasks.

Incidental learning

Much of our everyday learning is incidental. TBLT provides opportunities for unplanned learning. Completing a real-world task allows the acquisition to take place without any deliberate intention on the part of the learner or the teacher.

Meaningful learning

TBLT allows meaningful communication to occur during the accomplishment of tasks.

Disadvantages of TBLT

- Some teachers criticize TBLT for focusing mainly on fluency at the expense of accuracy.
- TBLT requires a high level of creativity and initiative on the part of the teacher.
- TBLT requires resources beyond the textbooks and related materials usually found in language classrooms.
- Evaluation of task-based instruction can be difficult. The nature of task-based learning does not allow it to be objectively measurable.

THEME 4: TEACHING GRAMAR AND LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

1. Defining grammar
2. Historical Perspective. Related theories
3. The Process of Learning Grammar. Implicit and explicit teaching of grammar.
4. Principles of teaching grammar

1. Defining grammar

Grammar is sometimes defined as "*the way words are put together to make correct sentences*" (P.Ur, 1999, 75).
We can also apply the term "grammar" to smaller units, such as clauses, phrases, words and even morphemes (e.g. –suffix –ed, -s plural of nouns, irregular forms of the past tense etc).

Question: Can you formulate a more precise definition of "grammar" in the light of explanations that follow the suggested definition?

Grammatical structures
A specific instance of grammar is usually called a "structure", e.g. the past tense, noun plurals, the comparison of adjectives etc.

Purpose of teaching grammar

The teaching of grammar means enabling language learners to *use* linguistic *forms accurately, meaningfully and appropriately* (D. Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p.256)

The *place of grammar* in FLT is *controversial*. Most people agree that knowledge of a language means knowing its grammar. But this knowledge may be intuitive, and it is not necessarily true that grammatical structures need to be taught, or that formal rules need to be learned. Or is it?

Task 1: Read the extracts given below and discuss you reactions.
1. Summarise in your own words what the writer is saying.
2. State whether you agree or disagree in principle.
3. In the light of your own experience as a learner, add further criticisms, positive or negative, of the writer's point of view.

OPINIONS ABOUT THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR

Extract 1. The important point is that the study of grammar as such is neither necessary nor sufficient for learning to use a language.

Extract 2. The student's craving for explicit formulization of generalizations can usually be met better by textbooks and grammars that he reads outside class than by discussion in class. (ibid.)

Extract 3. The language teacher's view of what constitutes knowledge of a language is . . . a knowledge of the syntactic structure of sentences . . . The assumption that the language teacher

appears to make is that once this basis is provided, then the learner will have no difficulty in dealing with the actual use of language . . . There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that this assumption is of very doubtful validity indeed.

Extract 4. The evidence seems to show beyond doubt that though it is by communicative use in real 'speech acts' that the new language 'sticks' in the learner's mind, insight into pattern is an equal partner with communicative use in what language teachers now see as the dual process of acquisition/learning. Grammar, approached as a voyage of discovery into the patterns of language rather than the learning of prescriptive rules, is no longer a bogey word.

2. Historical Perspective

Task 2: Read the extract and summarise the main points in the form of a plan:

Over the centuries, second language educators have alternated between two types of approaches to language teaching: those that focus on *analyzing the language* and those that focus *on using the language*. The former have students learn the elements of language (e.g., sounds, structures, vocabulary). The latter encourage students to use the language from the start in order to acquire it. Early in the previous century, this distinctive pattern was observable in the shift from the more form-oriented grammar translation approach to the use-oriented direct method (Celce-Murcia 1980). A more recent example of the shift is the loss of popularity of the cognitive-code approach, in which analyzing structures and applying rules are common practices, and the rise of more communicative approaches, which emphasize language use over rules of language usage (Widdowson 1978).

Educators agree that speaking and writing accurately is part of communicative competence. Further, it has been observed that although some learners can "pick up" accurate linguistic form from exposure to the target language, few learners are capable of doing so efficiently. In contrast, research has shown that teachers who focus students' attention on linguistic form during communicative interactions are more effective than those who never focus on form or who only do so in decontextualized grammar lessons (Spada and Lightbown 1993; Lightbown 1998).
*Focusing on grammatical form during communicative interactions rather than forms in isolation is one way to strike a balance between grammar and communication. (*D. Larcen-Freeman, 2001, p.251)

Related theories

The Audiolingual Method
- ALM was grounded in structuralist linguistics and behaviourist psychology, which advocated habit formation model of learning.
- As a result, structures were taught using repetitive drills.
- Grammar explanation was not given.
- Inductive presentation of grammar was preferred.
- Structures were taught one at a time.

The Communicative Approach
- Distinction is made between acquisition ("picking up" the language without making a conscious effort) and learning (as a result of formal instruction of forms, rules, and vocabulary).
- Language should be learnt by experiencing it meaningfully as a tool for communication.
- Problems occur where the availability of communicative use of language is limited, and exams require a high level of grammatical accuracy.

Question:
1. Analyse the place grammar previously occupied in the context of FLT.
2. Think how its role has changed in the contemporary classroom.

Task 3: Compare the traditional model and the communicative competence model for teaching the English past tense:
Traditional: grammar for grammar's sake
- Teach the regular -ed form with its two pronunciation variants
- Teach the doubling rule for verbs that end in d (for example, wed-wedded)
- Hand out a list of irregular verbs that students must memorize
- Do pattern practice drills for -ed
- Do substitution drills for irregular verbs

Communicative competence: grammar for communication's sake
- Distribute two short narratives about recent experiences or events, each one to half of the class
- Teach the regular -ed form, using verbs that occur in the texts as examples. Teach the pronunciation and doubling rules if those forms occur in the texts.
- Teach the irregular verbs that occur in the texts.
- Students read the narratives, ask questions about points they don't understand.
- Students work in pairs in which one member has read Story A and the other Story B. Students interview one another; using the information from the interview, they then write up or orally repeat the story they have not read.

Task 4: Think of a language teaching approach which tends to favour language use over language form. How could the approach incorporate more language form? Now think of an approach that favours language form over language use. How could a focus on language use be integrated?

3. The Process of Learning Grammar

Understanding of the learning process can be partly informed by insights from second language acquisition (SLA) research:
1. *Learners do not learn structures one at a time*. For example, it is not the case that learners master the definite article, and when that is mastered, move on to the simple past tense. Learning is a gradual process involving the mapping of form, meaning, and use; structures do not spring forth in learners' interlanguage fully developed and error-free.
2. Even when learners appear to have mastered a particular structure, it is not uncommon to find *backsliding* occurring with the introduction of new forms to the learners' interlanguage.

For example, the learner who has finally mastered the third person singular marker on present-tense verbs is likely to overgeneralize the rule and apply it to newly emerging modal verbs, thus producing errors such as *She cans speak Spanish.*

3. Second language learners *rely on the knowledge and the experience they have*. If they are beginners, they will rely on their LI as a source of hypotheses about how the L2 works; when they are more advanced, they will rely increasingly on the L2.

Explicit versus implicit

A great deal of the controversy in the teaching of grammar can be ascribed to the general issue of whether an explicit or implicit approach to teaching structure is best. *Explicit instruction is where students are instructed in the rules or patterns (deductive) or guided to induce them, themselves (inductive).* An implicit approach makes no reference to rules or patterns.

Another issue is the source of the explicit rules. Instead of presenting students with rules, for instance, Fotos and Ellis (1991) give students linguistic data from which they could work out the rules inductively in their own way. An inductive approach may be very fitting for complex rules, which are difficult to articulate and internalize.

Although implicit and explicit knowledge are different, at the same time explicit knowledge can influence implicit knowledge (N. Ellis, 2002, p. 164). This fact is significant for older learners who may no longer learn as well implicitly as they did as children, and conscious involvement may be necessary for successful learning.

Students who receive a blend of implicit and explicit grammar instruction are likely to be well served.

Research *findings* into the relative benefits of deductive and inductive methods have been *inconclusive. Short term gains for deductive* learning have been found, and there is some evidence to suggest that some kinds of language items are better 'given than 'discovered'. Moreover, when surveyed, most *learners tend to prefer deductive* presentations of grammar. Nevertheless, once exposed to inductive approaches, there is often less resistance as the learners see the benefits of solving language problems themselves. Finally, the *autonomy* argument is not easily dismissed: the capacity to discern patterns and regularities in naturally occurring input would seem to be an invaluable tool for self-directed learning, and one, therefore, that might usefully be developed in the classroom.

A Three-Dimensional Grammar Framework (by D. Larcen-Freeman, 2001)

In dealing with the complexity of grammar, three dimensions must concern us: **structure or form, semantics or meaning,** and the **pragmatic conditions** governing use.

Strategies for Learning Grammar

Language teachers and language learners are often frustrated by the disconnect between knowing the rules of grammar and being able to apply those rules automatically in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This disconnect reflects a separation between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge.

- **Declarative knowledge** is knowledge *about* something. Declarative knowledge enables a student to *describe a rule* of grammar and apply it in pattern practice drills.

- **Procedural knowledge** is knowledge of *how to do something*. Procedural knowledge enables a student to apply a rule of grammar in communication.

Procedural knowledge does not translate automatically into declarative knowledge; many native speakers can use their language clearly and correctly without being able to state the rules of its grammar. Likewise, declarative knowledge does not translate automatically into procedural knowledge; students may be able to state a grammar rule, but consistently fail to apply the rule when speaking or writing.

4. Principles of teaching grammar

- Researchers agree that some form of *grammar instruction should take place* in the Communicative classroom. Natural language acquisition is long and inefficient and the role of language pedagogy is to short-circuit the process and make language learning easier.
- Grammar should be taught *frequently* and *in little bits* with a lot of *recycling and revision*.
- Grammar should be taught systemically and react to students' *needs*.
- Grammar should be presented and practised in *meaning-oriented activities*.
- A combination of *inductive and deductive presentations* should be used.
- *Problem-solving grammar activities* in which students discuss a particular structure as task content should be used to develop learners' active knowledge of grammar.
- The techniques of *elicitation* (the teacher gets the learners to give information rather than giving it to them) and *corrective feedback* (teacher or peer paraphrase) should be used.

Presenting and Explaining Grammar

Presenting and explaining grammar is difficult. It should be *clear and simple*, *accurate and helpful* at the same time. However, what is *accurate may not be simple*, and a simplified account may not always be accurate.

Task 5: Classroom or peer teaching
*Presentation:*Present and explain a grammatical structure to a class; the presentation should not take longer than 5 minutes.
Feedback: Ask your teacher or groupmates how clear your presentation was, and if they have any particular comments.
Write out for yourself a set of guidelines for presenting and explaining grammar.

Questions on Grammar Presentation

1. *The structure itself.* Was the structure presented in both speech and writing, both form and meaning?
2. *Examples.* Were enough examples provided of the structure in a meaningful context? Are you sure the students understood their meanings?
3. *Terminology.* Did you call the structure by its name? If so, was it helpful?
4. *Language.* Was the structure explained in the students' mother tongue, or in the targer language, or in a combination of the two? Was this effective?
5. *Explanation.* Was the explanation reasonably accurate but not too detailed?
6. *Delivery.* Were you speaking (and writing) clearly and at an appropriate speed?
7. *Rules.* Was an explicit rule given? Why/why not? Did you explain it yourself or did you elicit it fro the students?

Guidelines on Presenting and Explaining Grammar

- A good presentation should include both oral and written forms, and both form and meaning.
- Contextualised examples should be given. Students should understand them. Visual materials can also contribute to understanding.
- Older and more analytically-minded learners will benefit more from the use of terminology, explicit rules.
- There should be balance between accuracy and simplicity. A simple generalisation is more helpful than a detailed grammar-book explanation.
- With reference to inductive or deductive methods: if learners can percieve and define rules themselves easily, then let them do it. If they find it difficult, provide the information yourself.

Grammar practice activities

Task 6. Look at the grammar exercises in a locally-used foreign language coursebook, and classify them roughly according to the types listed below. Many coursebooks provide plenty of exercises that suit the descriptions of Types 2–3, but tend to neglect the others. Is this true of the book you are looking at?

TYPES OF GRAMMAR PRACTICE: FROM ACCURACY TO FLUENCY

Type 1: Awareness After the learners have been introduced to the structure (see Unit Four above), they are given opportunities to encounter it within some kind of discourse, and do a task that focuses their attention on its form and/or meaning. Example: Learners are given extracts from newspaper articles and asked to underline all the examples of the past tense that they can find.

Type 2: Controlled drills Learners produce examples of the structure: these examples are, however, predetermined by the teacher or textbook, and have to conform to very clear, closed-ended cues. Example: Write or say statements about John, modelled on the following example: John drinks tea but he doesn't drink coffee. a) like: ice cream/cake b) speak: English/Italian c) enjoy: playing football/playing chess

Type 3: Meaningful drills Again the responses are very controlled, but the learner can make a limited choice.

Example: In order to practise forms of the present simple tense: Choose someone you know very well, and write down their name. Now compose true statements about them according to the following model: He/She likes ice cream; OR He/She doesn't like ice cream. a) enjoy: playing tennis b) drink: wine c) speak: Polish

Type 4: Guided, meaningful practice The learners form sentences of their own according to a set pattern; but exactly what vocabulary they use is up to them.
Example: Practising conditional clauses, learners are given the cue If I had a million dollars, and suggest, in speech or writing, what they would do.

Type 5: (Structure-based) free sentence composition Learners are provided witha visual or situational cue, and invited to compose their own responses; they are directed to use the structure.
Example: A picture showing a number of people doing different things is shown to the class; they describe it using the appropriate tense.

Type 6: (Structure-based) discourse composition Learners hold a discussion or write a passage according to a given task; they are directed to use at least some examples of the structure within the discourse.
Example: The class is given a dilemma situation ('You have seen a good friend cheating in an important test') and asked to recommend a solution. They are directed to include modals (might, should, must, can, could, etc.) in their speech/writing.

Type 7: Free discourse As in Type 6, but the learners are given no specific direction to use the structure; however, the task situation is such that instances of it are likely to appear.
Example: As in Type 6, but without the final direction.

2. Choose a grammar point in the coursebook. How meaningful are the presentation and the practice of the selected grammatical structure in the textbook you have chosen?

Grammatical Assessment

In the traditional approach to assessing grammar, grammatical knowledge is defined in terms of accurate production and comprehension, and then assessed through the four skills. Testing is typically done by means of decontextualized, discrete-point items such as *sentence unscrambling, fill-in-the-blanks, error correction, sentence completion, sentence combining, picture description, elicited imitation, judging grammatical correctness, and modified cloze passages*. Such formats test grammar knowledge, but they do not assess whether test takers can use grammar correctly in real-life speaking or writing. A significant contribution of the communicative or proficiency-based approach in the 1970s and 1980s was a shift from seeing language proficiency in terms of knowledge of structures, which could best be assessed using discrete-point items, to the ability to integrate and use the knowledge in performance, which could best be assessed through the production and comprehension of written texts and through face-to-face interaction under real-time processing conditions (McNamara & Roever, 2006, pp. 43–4).

In the latter, more integrative, approach to grammar assessment, grammatical performance is typically assessed by raters using scales that gauge grammatical accuracy, complexity, and the range of grammatical structures used.

Because of the preference in recent years for measuring the use of grammar holistically through speaking and writing, some standardized examinations, e.g., the TOEFL, no longer have a separate section of the test that deals with structure explicitly.

A consequence of such decisions, however, is that it is difficult to separate out what in the ability to read or write the texts is due to the lack of knowledge concerning grammatical structures and what might be due to other factors. We also have no way of diagnosing grammatical difficulties learners may be experiencing or in providing them with feedback (Purpura, 2004). In sum, discrete point and integrative tests represent different approaches to grammar assessment, each of which have a contribution to make.

Task 7:
- Analyse the main problems related to assessing grammatical knowledge.
- What techniques are typically used to assess grammatical knowledge?
- Give examples of discrete-point items used for measuring grammar knowledge.

Syllabus design

Various principles (e.g., *teaching simpler structures first, or more frequently occurring ones, or those with the most communicative utility*) have been invoked over the years for the sequencing of structures in grammatical syllabi (Larsen- Freeman, 1974). However, it has also been established that there are naturally occurring developmental sequences, and U-shaped learning curves, backsliding, and restructuring, which would seem to argue against any such overall principled sequencing of grammar structures in instruction.

While developmental sequences may indeed be impervious (difficult to influence) to instruction, it is likely the case that instruction accelerates the overall rate of acquisition. In support of this claim, Lightbown suggests that grammar instruction in advance of learners' readiness may prime their subsequent noticing (Lightbown, 1998), and Terrell offers a role for grammar instruction in providing students with advance organizers (1991).

Larsen-Freeman (2003) recommends that teachers adopt a "grammar checklist" rather than a sequence. In this way, teachers have an unordered set of grammar structures they need to teach, but they can do so locally in a way that attends to their students' readiness to learn. It also means that grammar structures can be worked on as they arise in content or during communicative activities, thus the contextualization that is facilitative of learning the grammar is already present. Finally, using a checklist also prompts teachers to work on certain structures that do not naturally arise during classroom activities, perhaps because students avoid them.

Question: How is grammar typically organised in the structural syllabus?

What are the possible stages in a lesson using the inductive approach?

As noted above there are a number of variations on a theme, but this is an example of one way to proceed:

1 Create the context – with a text which has already been used for skills practice, with a dialogue, or with a short visual/oral context.

   Example
   This is an extract from a lesson introducing comparative adjectives via a visual context (pictures or drawings) to a class of low-level students:

   The teacher shows a picture of a tall, thin man labelled *Sam*, and indicates by hand gesture that Sam is tall and elicits *Sam's tall*. The teacher shows a second picture of an even taller, even thinner man labelled *Tom* and elicits *Tom's tall*. The teacher then puts the two pictures side by side and says *Sam's tall and Tom's tall, but Tom's taller than Sam*. The teacher can do the same for *thin* and introduce more pictures and adjectives – *fat, short*, etc.

   If you set up the context through a picture or short dialogue, rather than using a text, you may want to ask some simple questions to make sure that the students have a general understanding of the context. In the example dialogue given on p132, for example, the teacher would need to check that the students understand that the people are at an airport, that one is the Customs Officer and the other is a traveller.

2 The situation should lead naturally to a sentence using the language to be taught – the *model* or *target* sentence.

   Example
   In the lesson presenting comparative adjectives above, the target sentence is *Tom's taller than Sam* and other sentences can be generated using the pattern *X's ... er than Y*. You can then say the target language and/or write it on the board.

3 Check that the students have grasped the meaning of the structure. (See *How can you check students have understood what is being presented?* on p138.)

4 Practise saying the target language. Concentrate on the pronunciation. (See Section 3: *Pronunciation*.) Let the students repeat after you or from a model provided on cassette. They can do this together and then individually. (If the structure is one that is usually written but not spoken, this stage can be omitted.)

5 Give further practice. This is usually less controlled than the repetition practice and can involve pairwork or groupwork.

6 Then write up* the language structure. At this stage a clear record of what has gone on before is given. Try to make the record the students copy from the board as memorable and integrated as possible (not just a list of unrelated sentences). Whenever possible elicit from the students the language you write on the board. This serves as a further check that they understand and remember what you have presented. Name the structure/function using clear headings, and give information about the form and/or use where appropriate.

* When you write the language up on the board depends to some extent on the students – some feel more secure if they can see the target language written up as soon as it is focused on. You can put the target or model sentence on the board (in Step 2 above) and then add to it after oral practice (in Step 6). Or you can write up the sentence but rub it off before oral practice. In this way the students are listening to, rather than reading, the sentence and their own pronunciation is likely to be better as a result.

If you are using translation with a monolingual group you can also write up the translation, if appropriate. Give examples of the language item in sentences, perhaps in the form of a *substitution table*. If possible, try to make the examples personal and memorable for the students.

Example

I am (I'm)		Sonja.
You are (You're)		Tomas.
Rick is (He's)	taller than	his brother.
We are (We're)		our parents.
On average Americans are (They're)		Mexicans.

Other means of helping to understand and remember the meaning can be added – by using 'time-lines', for example (see p138). Give the students time to copy the information in their note books or to make a note of where the information is recorded in their coursebook.

Whether you want to do more than this depends on the language item and the class. Further practice may be needed in the form of guided and/or freer practice, integrated into skills work – as part of the same lesson or on another day. You may also want to set some homework to practise the new language. In the lessons that follow you can try to build in activities that will re-activate the language item. Often students need a little time for the new item to 'sink in' – they may recognize it, but often delay putting it into active use.

What are the possible stages in a lesson using the deductive approach?

Again, there is no one way of presenting a structure using a deductive approach. However, one possible way of staging such a lesson is as follows:

1 Present the structure and explain the 'rule' in a way that involves the students.

Examples

In order to compare ways of talking about the future you could put two sentences on the board: *I'm seeing her tomorrow* and *OK, I'll see her tomorrow* and ask the students to discuss the difference in the situation and the meaning.

With a function you could give the students a number of exponents and ask them to group them – perhaps according to degree of formality – and then discuss when and with which people you would use such expressions. For example, with requests – *Open the window. Can you open the window? Open the window, would you? Do you think you could open the window? Would you like to open the window? I don't suppose you could open the window for me, could you?* etc.

2 Write up the language structure(s). (See Stage 6 in the inductive lesson above.)

3 Set up some activities so that the students can practise using the language in a meaningful context – perhaps in a roleplay, a discussion or in a piece of writing. The practice can often be integrated into skills work.

How can you check students have understood what is being presented?

There are a number of ways you can check that the students have understood the meaning of a language item and the way it is used. It makes sense to check their understanding *before* any controlled practice – otherwise they may just be repeating parrot-fashion!

Visuals

In addition to *illustrating* meaning, visuals can be used to *check* understanding.

Examples
Students can be asked to choose the picture that best illustrates the meaning of a particular word or sentence; to put pictures in order to show a sequence of events; or to match pictures and sentences, as in this example which compares the past simple and the past perfect.

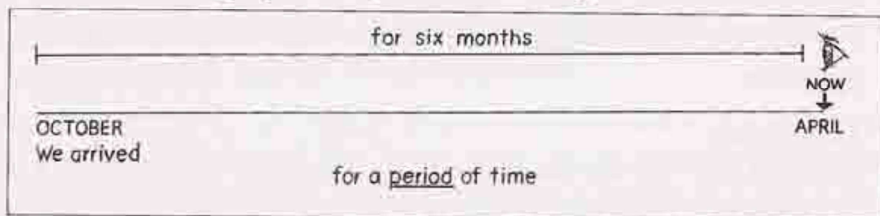Which sentence goes with which picture?
They started the meeting when she arrived.
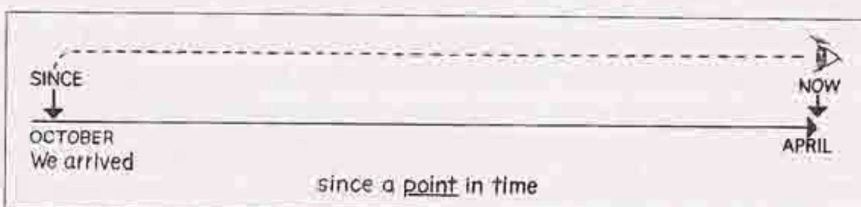*They'd started the meeting when she arrived.*
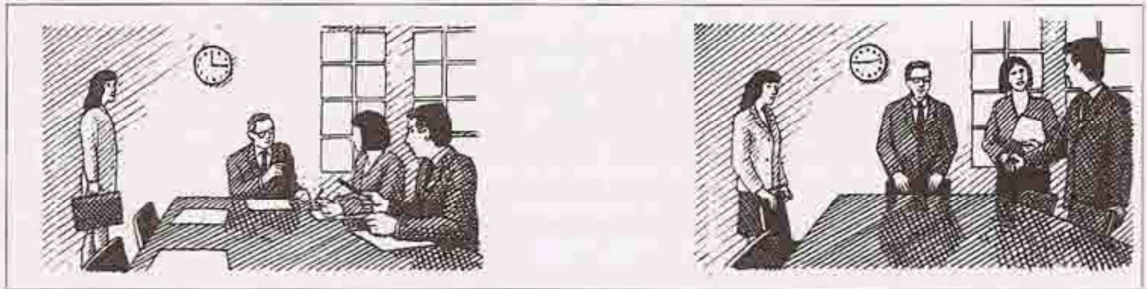
Time-lines

Time-lines are graphic ways of illustrating the use of tenses. For example:

We've been here for six months.

We've been here since October.

THEME 5: TEACHING VOCABULARY AND RELATED SKILLS

1.Definition and purpose of teaching vocabulary
2. Theories of vocabulary teaching
3. Teaching Vocabulary. Principles and stages of vocabulary teaching

1. Definition and purpose of teaching vocabulary

Definition

By vocabulary we mean **all lexical items**, such as individual <u>words</u> (book) and <u>word combinations</u> such as phrasal verbs (look up), idioms (hit the road), collocations (rancid butter) and bigger <u>lexical chunks</u> or formulae (I'll get it).

Task 1: Think of various examples of vocabulary items that consist of more than one word.

Purpose

Why teach vocabulary?

Wilkins: "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (cited in Tornbury, 2002, p.13).

A student who says *"Yesterday. Go disco. And friends. Dancing"* will get much of his message over despite avoiding grammar; the meaning is conveyed by the lexis alone. A good knowledge of grammar is not such a powerful tool. *"I wonder if you could lend me your…"* means little without a word to fill the gap, whereas the gapped word "Calculator" on its own could possibly communicate the desired message: *"Calculator?"*

Task 2: In your opinion, how does the place and importance of grammar and vocabulary correlate in the language classroom? What was your experience as a school learner?

The <u>teaching of lexis</u> was given <u>low status</u> <u>for a long time</u>, primarily owing to the linguistic approaches on which language teaching was based. In the audio-lingual approach, based on behaviourist psychology, learning was seen as habit formation. Consequently, the primary emphasis was put on drills of basic structural patterns, and words were only needed to fill these structures with. DeCarrio (in Celce-Murcia, 2001) points out that "once students learned the structural frames, lexical items to fill the grammatical slots could be learned later, as needed" (p.285).

Language learning approaches based on generative linguistics and Chomskyan model of rule acquisition also gave grammar the primary importance and lexis remained secondary.

Even in Hyme's model of communicative competence emphasis is given to pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions of language, with lexical competence carrying secondary importance.

It was the so-called Lexical Approach which turned this around and viewed lexis as the basis for language use with the motto: "language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar" (Lewis, 1993.p.89).   (from E.H.Kontra)

Task 3: Analyse what role vocabulary played in different approaches (both mainstream and alternative).

Vocabulary knowledge

Knowing a word means knowing its *form (pronunciation, spelling and grammar), its meaning*, its *connotations, word formation, and* how it *collocates* with other words and how it fits within a whole network of meanings.

Question: When can you state that you know the word?

2. Theories of vocabulary teaching

The 4 most influential trends in language teaching regarding vocabulary have been the following:

- the Council of Europe's "Threshold Level" (Van Ek, 1973) – specifies the "common core" that all learners should acquire;
- the Notional Syllabuses (Wilkins, 1976) or the Notional-Functional Syllabuses;
- Nattinger and deCarrico's work on formulaic speech. They explain that discourse consists of a large number of prefabricated, ready-made chunks ready for use in a given context. They developed their theory as an explanation of native speaker fluency. They say that language is retained in "chunks" and that speakers maintain fluency by retrieving prefabricated elements of speech.
- The Lexical Approach pays attention not only to single words but more importantly to collocations and institutionalized utterances and sentence frames. Michael Lewis states that

"instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations, and to present these in expressions. Rather than trying to break things into ever smaller pieces, there is a conscious effort to see things in larger, more holistic, ways" (1997a, p. 204).

Claims of the Lexical Approach

Central to the lexical approach is the <u>focus on teaching real English</u> and a shift away from the artificial language found in ELT textbook and which is drawn from the intuition of textbook designers. In fact, the approach contends that the language <u>course books teach is "not what people really say."</u> That is why it is urgent to avoid distorting the language with course book writer intuition and access the authentic language via <u>corpora</u> (a large amount of written and sometimes spoken material collected to show the state of a language). Corpora can instantly provide us with the relative frequencies, collocations, and prevalent grammatical patterns of the lexis in question across a range of genres.

So how does the Lexical Approach deal with the teaching part? Even if the approach doesn't present a clear theory of learning there are some hints about how the teaching looks like within the approach.

- Successful language is a wider concept than accurate language. Emphasis is on successful communication not grammatical mastery.
- Language is not learnt by learning individual sounds and structures and then combining them, but by an increasing ability to break down wholes into parts. We can also use whole phrases without understanding their constituent parts.
- Noticing and recording language patterns and collocations.
- Grammar is acquired by a process of observation, hypothesis and experiment. That is, the Observe-Hypothesise-Experiment cycle replaces the Present-Practise-Produce Paradigm.
- Grammar exploration instead of grammar explanation.
- Intensive and extensive listening and reading in the target language.
- First and second language comparisons and translation—carried out chunk-for-chunk, rather than word-for-word—aimed at raising language awareness.
- Repetition and recycling of activities.
- Guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from context.

- The language activities consistent with a lexical approach must be directed toward naturally occurring language and toward raising learners' awareness of the lexical nature of language.
- Working with dictionaries and other reference tools.

Task 4:

- How did the attitudes towards vocabulary teaching fluctuate at different times?
- Comment on the reasons that prompted the shift of vocabulary teaching to a more prominent status.

Receptive versus productive words

As Thornbury (2002) states "we understand more words than we utter". Word knowledge can be receptive or productive. Receptive knowledge consists of words which learners understand but do not use. By contrast, productive knowledge is the active vocabulary that learners understand and actually use to communicate.

How is vocabulary knowledge organized?

The mind seems to store words neither randomly, nor in the form of a list, but in a highly organized and interconnected fashion – in what is called a **mental lexicon**.

Learning vocabulary is more like network building. Learners start by labeling things and end up by categorizing these labels. The process is similar to what a baby does to acquire the mother tongue vocabulary. When a baby sees a *dog* for the first time, it first starts by knowing its name (i.e. labeling it). The baby goes through the same process to name *cat* and *horse*. Then an umbrella term (i.e. a superordinate term), namely, "animals" is used to categorize the three terms. The same procedure is used to build other related sets of vocabulary items.

Vocabulary learning is like network-building

Foreign or second language learners need to build a large network of vocabulary to be able to communicate with native speakers. Research suggests that these learners need to know **at least 2000 of high-frequency words**.

How we learn vocabulary

Vocabulary learning can be *incidental,* through indirect exposure of words, or *intentional,* through explicit instruction in specific words and word learning strategies.

Questions: What is the significance of incidental acquisition of words? What is the importance of direct/explicit teaching of vocabulary and its intentional learning?

How we remember words

Short-term memory/Working memory/ Long-term memory

The *short term memory* holds vocabulary items in one's mind for a few seconds. These vocabulary items become part of the *working memory* once learners start manipulating and working with them through activities such as:

- looking them up in a dictionary,
- matching them with synonyms or antonyms,
- sequencing them,
- ranking them according to their importance,
- identifying their collocates etc.

Vocabulary items are stored in the **long-term memory** to become durable over time when learners repeatedly meet them in different contexts.

3. Teaching Vocabulary. Principles and stages of vocabulary teaching

To teach vocabulary, teachers should help learners:

…acquire a critical mass of words for use in both understanding and producing language. (At least **2000 high-frequency words**)

…remember words over time and be able to recall them readily.

…develop strategies to learn new vocabulary.

Principles of vocabulary teaching

Vocabulary learning should be based on the following principles:

1. **Repetition and multiple encounter**: Not only memorizing words through repetition (i.e. rote learning), but also repeated encounter of words.

2. **Cognitive depth**: This refers to the manipulation of words by learners. The decisions they make about the words are of paramount importance. Cognitive depth principle includes activities such as using a dictionary to look up a word, matching words with their synonyms or antonyms, identifying collocations, sequencing words, gap-fills…

3. **Affective depth**: Learners do not need only cognitive information about words, but they also need to entertain some affective or emotional relationship with words in order to be memorable. For example, asking learners to choose a number of words (they like) from a text to write a story/ a paragraph about themselves can lead to affective depth.

4. **Retrieval**: The more one recalls a word, the more it becomes memorable.

5. Re-contextualization: Words have to be met and used to say new things in different contexts in reading, listening, speaking and writing. This has a positive impact on learning.

6. **Personalization** (Use it or lose it): Using the words learned to express personal experiences.

7. **Spacing**: This refers to practice.The interval between successive practice of a set of words, should gradually increase.

What vocabulary to teach?

With a General English class introduce words as follows:

-the "easy" words before the "difficult";

- the concrete before the abstract;

- the most frequent before the uncommon;

- the "useful" words should be taught first;

- "all-purpose" before those that have a more restricted use (e.g. "chair" before "armchair" or "highchair");

- teach 8-12 words per lesson;

- distinguish between active and passive vocabulary. Do you need them for receptive or productive use?;

Stages of vocabulary teaching

1. Encountering new vocabulary (Presentation)

At the presentation stage, or better at the stage where learners encounter new vocabulary items, the teacher provides contextualized exposure of these vocabulary items.

After quick comprehension activities, the teacher raises learners' awareness of the target vocabulary items and asks them to notice its form and use in that particular context.

Learners make guesses about the meaning.

The teacher then provides activities where learners match, select or identify words with their definitions.

Task 5: Exploring different ways of presenting new vocabulary (P.Ur)

Stage 1. Ideas for presenting specific items:

Select an item from the vocabulary taught in a foreign language textbook you know. Think how the meaning of this item would best be presented to learners who are encountering it for the first time, and note down some ideas. The task may me done in groups.

Ways of presenting the meaning of new items

- Concise definition (as in a dictionary);
- Detailed description (of appearance, qualities…);
- Examples;
- Illustration (picture, object);
- Demonstration (acting, mime);
- Context (story or sentence in which the item occurs);
- Synonyms, antonyms;
- Translation;
- Associated ideas, collocations etc;

Stage 2. Study the list of techniques given in the box. Identify which one or more of the techniques were used in your own ideas for presentation. If you are in a group: were there any techniques which

tended to be more "popular", others which were barely used? On second thoughts: would you use other techniques to supplement your original idea for presentation?

Stage 3. Discussion. Discuss generalizations that can be made about the usefulness of the different techniques.

Questions for discussion: vocabulary presentation techniques

1. Some techniques are more popular than others. What are they, and can you account for their popularity?
2. Are there techniques that are particularly appropriate for the presentation of certain types of words?
3. Are there techniques which are likely to be more, or less, appropriate fro particular learner populations (young/adult, beginner/advanced)?
4. Do you, as an individual, find that you prefer some kinds of techniques and tend to avoid others? Which? And why?

Comments:

1. Answers to this will vary; on the whole, definition, synonym and description tend to be the most popular. Others are more demanding but can be rewarding in terms of effective teaching and interest.
2. Yes. A concrete object is more easily illustrated visually, an action can be mimed. Difficult concepts can be translated or explained.
3. Younger learners react well to concrete illustration, older can cope better with more abstract explanation or definition.

2. Integrating vocabulary (Practice)

This stage involves practice activities where learners manipulate and work with the vocabulary items. In other words, they put vocabulary to work to satisfy the cognitive depth principle through activities such as:

3. Production

This is the stage where learners use the vocabulary items to talk about real things in their lives. Personalization of vocabulary items may lead some kind of affective depth. Teachers may ask their learners, for example, to choose a certain number of words from the text (let's say 4 words) and use them to talk about their personal experience or to write a story…

Skills to be taught:

- <u>dictionary skills</u>: learner's dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries for students;
- <u>deducing meaning form context</u>: learning words from authentic materials and pleasure reading;
- keeping a <u>record</u> of new vocabulary;
- <u>memory strategies</u>: using imagery, using key words, word cards, mnemonic procedures, copying, immediate repetition, spaced repetition, contextual association (learners associate the word with a particular situation or event), linguistic association (learners associate a word with a familiar item in the L1 or L2);
- <u>reviewing</u>: learners should review new material soon after the initial meeting and then at gradually increasing intervals, e.g. 5-10 minutes, 1 day, 1 week, 1 month, 6 months.
- importance of <u>autonomous, self-initiated learning</u> activities in vocabulary learning (e.g. watching foreign TV channels, video tapes, reading magazines, keeping records of new vocabulary etc.);
  (from E.H.Kontra)

Question: what learning strategies do you know of for enhancing the storage and retrieval of foreign language vocabulary?

Group task 6: Sharing ideas

Stage 1. Each participant prepares a vocabulary activity which they think is effective;
Stage 2. The activities are presented to the group. The presenter role-plays the teacher and the others the students.
Stage 3. A discussion should follow.
What was the main objective of the activity (presentation, awareness-raising, review, practice etc.)?

What aspects of the vocabulary did the activity focus on? How effective was it, and why? How interesting was it? For what sort of class is it appropriate?

Revision task 7.

Meeting and remembering words

Revise

1) For questions 1–4, match the descriptions with the technical terms A–D.

A. Arousal and affect

B. Cognitive engagement

C. Repetition of encounter

D. Retrieval and use

1. We want students to meet words they have been learning again and again.

2. We want students to engage with words emotionally as well as intellectually.

3. We want students to think about the words they are studying.

4. We want students to try and use the words that they know.

2) Put the activities 1–9 in the column that suits them best.

Activities for 'arousal and affect'

Activities for 'cognitive engagement'

Activities for 'repetition of encounter'

Activities for 'retrieval and use'

1. Students are introduced to some new words in a poem that we think will 'move' them emotionally.

2. Students are shown a list of words. They have to say which they would put in their suitcase (= I want to keep it and use now), which they would put in the fridge (= I will probably need the word later), and which they want to put in the dustbin (= I don't want or need this word).

3. Students fill out a chart listing all the different word forms in a word family.

4. Students have been studying tourism. They read some more tourism brochures.

5. Students have to put a list of personality adjectives on a line which stretches from horrible to lovely.

6. Students have to say which their favourite word (from a list) is.

7. Students read a story which uses many of the words they have been studying recently.

8. Students role-play someone going to a tourism office. They have to make a booking for a holiday.

9. Students tell a story which will probably provoke them to use many of the words they have studied in recent weeks.

Research

3) Study a unit from a coursebook for teaching English. Find three words in the unit that relate to the unit topic and see how often they are used. Look at the next unit and the one after that. Are the words used again?

Reflect

4) We often remember words best when we are emotionally engaged with them for some reason, e.g. because of how they sound, what they mean, where we 'met' them, etc. What are your favourite words in English? Do you know why you like them so much?

Vocabulary Activities for any Level

Quick Bingo

Aim: vocabulary review
1. Write all the items you want to review scattered on the board.
2. Tell each student to write down any five of them, whichever they choose.
3. Call out the items one by one (or definitions, or L1 translations, or hints), students cross their items off as they hear them.
4. The first winner(s) is/are the first to cross off all their items.
5. The second winner(s) is/are the last to cross off all their items.

Recall and share

Aim: vocabulary review
1. Write all the items you want to review scattered on the board.
2. Tell students to 'photograph' them in their minds (they aren't allowed to write them down) and try to memorize them.
3. Erase or hide the items.
4. Give students time to write down as many as they can remember on their own.
5. Then tell them to share with classmates, try to list more, and check each other's spelling.
6. Finally show the items again on the board.

Make a mini-context

Aim: vocabulary review
1. Write up items you want to review, scattered all over the board.
2. Challenge students to do one of the following.
   a) Invent sentences that include at least *two* of the items. Draw a line between the two items anyone manages to connect. Later, challenge students to recall what the sentences were that are represented by each line.
   b) Invent sentences that *link an item to themselves* in some way.
   c) Invent sentences that are *false*, using one of the items in each.
   d) Invent *questions* to which one of the items is the answer.
3. All this can be done orally; alternatively, give students a minute or two to write down suggestions before sharing

Odd one out

Aim: vocabulary review
1. Give students groups of five nouns (or verbs, or adjectives) that relate to the same basic theme, but without any particular obvious 'odd one out'.
2. Challenge them to justify why each in turn might be the 'odd one out'.
   (Elementary students might need to do some of this justifying in L1).

Tip

Make a routine of five minutes for vocabulary review every lesson: either just 'get out your vocabulary notebooks and check through vocabulary you've learnt recently' or teacher-initiated, using one of the ideas suggested here.

Brainstorm: associations

Aim: vocabulary expansion (and review)
1. Give a theme word, students call out any other words or phrases that occur to them that are associated, any part of speech.

2. Add more yourself, and teach the new items.

Brainstorm: what goes with…?

Aim: vocabulary expansion (and review)
1. Give a noun, students suggest all the adjectives that might describe it (e.g. *road:* a long road, a busy road, a new road…).
2. Add more yourself, and teach them.

Variations:
- Give an adjective, students suggest all the nouns it might describe (e.g. *red*: a red shirt, a red sign, a red nose…).
- Give a verb, students suggest all the nouns that might be its object (e.g. *read*: a book, a newspaper, a sign, a t-shirt…).
- Give an adverb, students suggest all the verbs it might describe (e.g. *slowly*: write, speak, walk…).

Dictations

Aim: vocabulary review

(Note that normally we don't remember what we don't understand, so if a student can spell a word that you say, that probably means he/she knows what it means.)
1. Simply dictate words or phrases, students write them down. OR:
2. Translation dictation: Say the word or phrase in L1, students write it in English. OR
3. Write up the target words or sentences with vowels (or random letters) missing. Dictate the words or sentences, and students write out the entire words or sentences.

Tip
When writing translations on the board, keep separate colors for English and L1: for example, English always in black, Hebrew or Arabic always in green.

Classroom Spelling Bee

Aim: vocabulary review and oral spelling skills
1. All pupils stand up in class in order of seating arrangement.
2. Each pupil in his/her turn orally spells the word given by the teacher
3. If the pupil spells the word correctly, s/he remains standing until the next round(s).
4. If the pupil misspells the word, s/he sits down and waits out the game until all the words have been reviewed and the winners remain standing.

THEME 6: INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

1. Goals of teaching pronunciation
2. Factors affecting pronunciation learning
3. Effects of differences between first language and second language
4. Principles of teaching pronunciation

1. Goals of teaching pronunciation

Most teachers agree that they want their students to be able to speak English with good pronunciation. But what does that mean? What *is* good pronunciation?

One answer might be "sounding like a native speaker." However, this answer is problematic for a couple of reasons. First, it's hard to define what "a native speaker" sounds like. There are so many varieties of English and so much variation within each type that it's almost impossible to define that elusive "ideal" pronunciation. Trying to sound like a native speaker is like throwing a ball at a moving target—difficult, frustrating, and likely to fail.

Another problem is that very few learners will ever be able to sound exactly like their preferred pronunciation model, no matter how hard or how long they try. This is especially true for adult learners and for those who don't constantly hear English in their daily lives. Whatever the definition, speaking with nativelike pronunciation is not an easy goal to reach.

A more realistic goal, and one that more and more teachers and researchers recommend, is *intelligible* pronunciation—speaking in a way that most listeners, both native and nonnative speakers, can understand without too much effort or confusion. It's not a bad thing if you can still tell that the speaker comes from a particular country or region, as long as the speaker can be easily understood by others (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010).

Still, while it's not practical to set our goal impossibly high, we also can't afford to set it too low. It's not helpful for students to become too complacent and to believe that their pronunciation is fine when, in fact, it may not be easily understood by anyone other than their own teacher and classmates. To be truly intelligible to a wide range of listeners, and not just to willing listeners of their own language background, speakers need to come fairly close to some kind of a recognized standard, whether it's one of the major native-speaker varieties or a nonnative variety of pronunciation that is easily understood by listeners from many backgrounds. As responsible teachers, we must make sure we don't set the bar too low.

We should also realize that English teachers, both native and nonnative speakers, are often *not* the best judges of whether someone's pronunciation is intelligible. Many EFL teachers can understand their students' speech when people in the wider world can't; in fact, it sometimes seems that we teachers can understand practically anything. We're used to inaccurate pronunciation. We know what students are going through and how hard they're trying. We're on their side and *want* to understand them, while a future employer or a cashier at Starbucks might not try so hard. Nonteachers are a tough audience (Lane, 2010).

Accuracy and Fluency

We often think of pronunciation teaching in terms of helping students achieve accurate pronunciation so that their production of sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation begins to match an ideal pattern. But **accuracy** is only one part of good pronunciation. **Fluency** in producing sounds and other aspects of pronunciation is equally important. The two don't always go together. For example, many students learn to produce a new sound correctly when they're concentrating carefully and saying it alone or in a single word. When they need to use that same sound in conversation, however, it's much more difficult to keep producing it correctly—they can't pronounce the sound *fluently.* After all, in real-world speaking, pronunciation is just one among many things that students have to think about. Vocabulary, grammar, the ideas they want to express, and the appropriate degree of politeness and formality also occupy their attention.

It's hard to use pronunciation accurately and fluently at the same time. Because of this, when we're practicing pronunciation, we should include some activities that emphasize pronunciation fluency—speaking smoothly and easily, even if not all the sounds are perfect—along with activities that emphasize accuracy—producing sounds correctly. Both accuracy and fluency are important in pronunciation, just as they are in speaking in general, and both deserve attention and practice.

Trends in Teaching Pronunciation: The Pendulum Swings

Over the years, styles of language teaching have changed greatly, and the same is true of teaching pronunciation. In some time periods, teaching pronunciation has been considered extremely important, while at other times it hasn't been given much attention at all. Trends in teaching pronunciation are like a swinging pendulum—the emphasis goes from one extreme to the other.

Until recently, the focus in pronunciation teaching was almost entirely on producing individual sounds and words correctly; not much attention was given to features such as **intonation** and **rhythm**. In the last 20 years or so, however, teachers and researchers have begun to realize the importance of these "musical" aspects of pronunciation and to emphasize them more strongly in teaching (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Goodwin, 2001). Some scholars have gone so far as to claim that teaching individual sounds is not so important, and intonation, stress, prominence, and rhythm should be emphasized above all (Lane, 2010; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Gilbert, 2008).

It seems more practical, though, to realize that no single aspect of pronunciation can stand on its own. Our students can benefit from learning about both individual sounds and the musical aspects of pronunciation, and we need to find a balance between these two areas. The pendulum of teaching trends might keep swinging, but we don't have to let it knock us down. Choose methods and activities that combine both aspects of pronunciation so that the combination works best for you and your students.

2. Factors Affecting Pronunciation Learning

Many things contribute to learning pronunciation, from students' ages, motivation, and personality— which depend on the learners themselves—to the quality of the teaching and the students' first language—which are outside factors.

The Age of the Learner

We've all observed how easily babies and very young children learn languages. They just seem to absorb the sounds and words they hear around them and, little by little, learn to imitate them accurately. **Linguists** call this time in a child's life, lasting up to the age of about 12 to 14 years, the **critical period for language acquisition**. Children can learn the sounds of language more naturally than adults and can approach native speaker pronunciation, but only if they are surrounded by the language and have many chances to hear its pronunciation. Young children who hear English only a couple of hours a week lose much of their learning advantage.

Effective pronunciation learning is not limited to young children, however. Older children and adults have their own strengths and can also learn pronunciation well, even if they never sound quite like native speakers. Adults are better able to set goals and to practice purposefully. They can

understand more abstract explanations and analyze how sounds are produced and how the melody and rhythm of a language sound. Adults should not give up the hope of having easily intelligible pronunciation; they just have to reach their goal in a different way than children.

Motivation

Learners in any subject area tend to make more progress if they *want* to learn. No teacher can force students to learn if they're not motivated. A proverb says, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." This also applies to teaching pronunciation. We can provide information and many chances to practice, but we don't have the power to change our students' pronunciation for them. They have to want to do it and be willing to do the work themselves.

Three general sets of goals or desires have been suggested that can motivate students in language learning (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 21):

• Learners want to be accepted into a group that uses the language. The group might still recognize the learners as "outsiders," but they can function well in the group. This is sometimes called **integrative motivation**.

• They want to be accepted as real members of the group. They don't want to be thought of as "outsiders." This is called **assimilative motivation**.

• They want to be able to use the language to reach a goal: To get a job, to conduct business, to pass a test, or to travel easily in a foreign country. This is called **instrumental motivation**.

If we recognize our students' goals in learning English, we can help motivate them by showing them how improving their pronunciation will help them reach their goals.

Personality and Aptitude

No two people are alike. We each have our own personality, talents, strengths, and weaknesses. These factors can affect how people learn pronunciation. Teachers sometimes assume that more outgoing learners will be able to learn pronunciation better than shyer students, and there may be some truth to this. Confident students might speak more and be more willing to try new sounds, and this extra practice could help them improve their pronunciation. However, this improvement is certainly not guaranteed. Some outgoing students may be producing a lot of language, but they may also be jumping ahead without paying attention to the accuracy of their pronunciation. If listeners are impressed by their fluency and accept their imperfect pronunciation, they have no way to know that they need to improve.

Some more introverted students might actually be thinking carefully about sounds and practicing "within themselves," even if they don't speak much in class. Don't underestimate the quiet students. Appreciate the strengths and possibilities of all your students, and encourage everyone. All students can learn and improve in their own way.

Another aspect of personality that can affect pronunciation is the degree to which a person is willing or able to change the way he or she sounds. Most of us have been speaking and listening to language in the same, familiar way since we learned to talk. Our voice and our pronunciation are a central part of the way we see ourselves. It can be uncomfortable, and possibly even frightening, to try out unfamiliar sounds and melodies of language. For some people this process seems like a small bump in the road, but for others, it's a serious roadblock.

Finally, some people seem to have more of an aptitude or talent for learning language or imitating pronunciation than others. We say that some people "have a good ear" for language. Of course, this is something that is almost impossible to define or measure. What seems like a natural talent may be partly due to special motivation, encouragement from parents or teachers, or growing up in an environment where there are many opportunities to hear and learn other languages. In fact, there's no magical ability possessed by some people but not others that determines whether someone can be a successful language learner. As teachers, we need to believe that everyone has an ability to learn pronunciation. Then we need to give all our students the help they need to do it well.

Methods and Quality of Teaching

So far I've discussed factors that depend on the learners themselves, but there are also outside factors that affect pronunciation learning. The kind of teaching students have experienced, both in amount and quality, has a strong influence on their learning. Have they received a lot of training in pronunciation, only a little, or perhaps almost none at all? How much practice have they had? Was it effective practice using a variety of activities or entirely "repeat after me" without effective feedback from the teacher? Were the teachers interested in pronunciation, or did they consider it to be only unnecessary fluff? Is it even possible that their past teachers have given them false information or provided an extremely inaccurate model? The quality of teaching that students receive certainly affects the quality of their learning.

Exposure to the Target Language

Students' pronunciation learning is also affected by how much English they have a chance to hear in their daily lives. Learners who live in an English-speaking country where they are constantly

surrounded by the language will be more familiar with the sounds and melodies they're trying to imitate than those who have few chances to hear spoken English—perhaps only during English classes for a few hours each week.

The Influence of the Learner's Language

A learner's first language (often referred to as the **L1**) has a strong influence on the way he or she learns the pronunciation of a second language (referred to as the **L2**). Often this influence is helpful, such as when some sounds are very similar in the two languages. For example, knowing how to pronounce /m/ in one language makes it easy for a learner to pronounce /m/ in another language.

However, learners' pronunciation habits in their first language can also make it more difficult for them to pronounce sounds in the new language that don't exist in their L1 or that are used in a different way. This influence is called **native language interference** or **language transfer**.

3. Effects of Differences Between First Language and Second Language

What happens when learners hear and try to pronounce strange, new sounds in a new language? These types of problems often occur:

Merging. When learners hear unfamiliar sounds in a new language, they tend to interpret the sounds of the new language in terms of the categories of their original language. The learner's brain may hear two sounds as being the same when they're actually considered separate sounds in the new language. This is called merging and leads to pronunciation errors. When our brains and ears can't tell the difference between two similar sounds, we tend to pronounce both of them in the same way. For example, many languages don't have separate vowel sounds like the ones in *reach* (/iy/) and *rich* (/ɪ/). Speakers of these languages may merge the two sounds and pronounce them both in the same way.

Substitution. When learners hear a new sound that doesn't match any of the sounds they know, they often substitute a familiar sound that is somewhat similar and easier for them to produce. For example, the first sound in *think* and *three* is found in relatively few languages in the world. Speakers of languages that don't have this sound often substitute /s/, /f/, or /t/ so that *think* sounds like *sink, fink,* or *tink*.

The effect on intelligibility. The processes of substitution and merging can cause serious problems for learners' intelligibility. When listeners expect to hear one sound but actually hear a different one, communication can break down. Even when teachers make learners aware of what's happening, it's difficult not to fall into one of these traps.

Problems with Individual Words

So far we've been thinking about pronunciation problems that are very general—they affect all the words with a particular sound or combination of sounds. However, sometimes specific words can cause pronunciation problems. Two causes of this are described here.

Spelling. English has many words with irregular or unpredictable spellings, and this can lead students to mispronounce those words. For example, if students learn the words *rain, plain,* and *maintain,* they will naturally assume that the letters *ain* must represent /eyn/. Then if they see the written word *mountain,* they may mistakenly pronounce it /mawnteyn/. Since students often meet words first in their written form, this can lead to incorrect pronunciation of many words.

Borrowed words. Many languages have borrowed words from English, adapting their pronunciation to fit the sound system of the borrowing language. (Sometimes the meanings of the words have also changed, but that's a separate issue.)

We might think that knowing words that have been borrowed from English into the student's native language would make it easier to learn those words in English, and this is often true with word meanings. However, familiarity with these borrowed words can actually make it harder for learners to pronounce the words correctly in English if they assume that the pronunciation is the same in English as it is in their native language. This can cause misunderstandings. Teachers need to take special care to point out and practice words that are pronounced differently in English than their borrowed counterparts.

Fossilization

One of the most stubborn problems that we face in teaching pronunciation is **fossilization**.

Fossilization is a process that occurs when a language learner progresses to a certain point but then has a hard time making further progress. For example, a student who has been studying English for many years might still not be able to differentiate /v/ as in *very* and /b/ as in *berry*; this error just seems to have become a permanent part of the person's English.

When students begin to learn a new language, they usually feel like they're making progress

fairly quickly. Since they're starting from zero, any new knowledge feels like a great step forward. But after a while, students may find that their teacher and classmates understand them when they say /b/ instead of /v/, and so they lose their incentive for trying to say /v/ accurately. Their habit of saying /b/ for /v/ seems frozen in time, like a fossil of an ancient animal. Their mistake has become fossilized, and at this point, it becomes very hard to change.

Most students who have been learning English for a while have some fossilized pronunciations that are very hard to change or improve. So what can the teacher do to help crack up those fossils?

First, we have to recognize the fossilized forms and help students realize what error they're making and why it's causing a problem in understanding. Next, the learner has to be willing to put lots of effort into changing his or her pronunciation. It won't happen easily, and it won't happen at all if the student doesn't work at it. We need to provide information, opportunities for focused practice, and feedback to the learner on how well his or her pronunciation is reaching the goal. It's difficult to change fossilized pronunciation, but it's not impossible.

A more effective strategy in the long run is to try to prevent fossilization in the first place. Emphasize pronunciation at all levels of teaching, *especially for beginners.* It's easier to get learners started on the right path than to try to change their fossilized pronunciation later.

Learning to Hear

Being able to hear the difference between sounds in a new language is as important as being able to produce the sounds. However, hearing new sounds is not always easy. How we as adults hear sounds is a result of the way we've become used to hearing and classifying them in our own language. We don't "hear" and pay attention to all the speech sounds that come into our ears— only the ones that we're used to hearing.

When we were babies just learning our first language, our brains were ready to hear and accept the sounds of any language. Babies are talented that way. But as we grew up and became more firmly anchored in our own language, we got used to paying attention only to the sounds we needed to hear—the sounds of our own language that we heard around us every day. We didn't need to understand any other sounds, so our brains never built up the ability to identify and produce them. Our brains developed a **phonological filter** that lets us hear the sounds of our own language very efficiently but "filters out" and ignores unfamiliar, unnecessary sounds. As adults, when we hear new sounds, it's difficult to identify or understand them—we're still hearing through the filter of our first language.

To pronounce a new language well, we need to learn to hear again. We have to remove the filter that's hiding some of those new sounds so that our brains can hear, accept, analyze, and get ready to imitate them. The first step in doing this is to be aware of the filter and deliberately try to get past it. The next, ongoing step is to build up our awareness of new sounds, to pay close attention to what we hear, and to imitate the new sounds until we can do it accurately. We need to practice hearing sounds well, just as we need to practice pronouncing them well.

I sometimes tell students that to learn pronunciation well, they need to hear with their mouths and speak with their ears. That is, when they listen, they think to themselves, "How would I move my mouth to make that same sound? Where would I put my tongue and lips?" According to **phonologist** Peter Ladefoged (2006, p. 110), "It seems as if listeners sometimes perceive an utterance by reference to their own motor activities. When we listen to speech, we may be considering, in some way, what we would have to do in order to make similar sounds" (p. 110). The other side of this idea is that when we speak, we should constantly listen to what we're saying and compare it to what we know it should sound like. We monitor and self-correct our own pronunciation, using our ears to give feedback to our mouths about what we're doing right or wrong and what needs to be changed.

Feelings That Can Stand in the Way

Learners' feelings about language and pronunciation sometimes make it harder for them to develop accurate pronunciation, especially for students who don't have a choice about learning English. For example, junior high or high school students in EFL settings are sometimes reluctant to seem different from their peers by using new, "foreign-sounding" pronunciation. It's easier and more comfortable to pronounce words in a way that fits their own, familiar language patterns. They also may not see the point in concentrating on pronunciation. After all, English is just one school subject among many, and depending on their country and culture, they may not foresee a need to speak English in their future lives. If pronunciation isn't tested and doesn't count for part of their grade, why try? For all of us, our voice is an important part of ourselves, and our customary pronunciation is a vital part of our voice. Throughout our lives, we've become used to hearing certain sounds come out of our mouths and not others. Our pronunciation has always marked us as members of a certain language or dialect group. Changing our pronunciation can seem threatening, as if it will cause us to lose our identity as a member of our own group. It seems safer and easier not to change (Gilbert, 2008). However, if students can look at their attempts to change pronunciation as

a way of adding a new skill or a new, temporary language identity rather than replacing their original selves, it can seem less threatening.

4. Principles of Teaching Pronunciation

Pronouncing sounds involves both our minds and our bodies. When you learn new sounds, you need to learn to move the muscles of your mouth in new ways and change the pronunciation habits you've built up all through your life. Your mouth also needs to build up **muscle memory**—the ability to do something more easily after practicing it many times. Your muscles begin to "remember" how to move in a certain way because they've done it so often.

Teaching pronunciation also takes time. As teachers, we can't just teach something once and expect our students to master it right away. We need to come back to the same point again and again, giving students lots of review and continued practice.

What Do Teachers Need to Know?

To teach pronunciation effectively, you need several types of knowledge:

• You need to know the facts about pronunciation: How speakers' mouths move when they produce the sounds of language, and how word stress, rhythm, connected speech, and intonation work.

• You need to understand and be able to predict the kinds of problems your students might have with pronunciation and why they happen.

• You need to know many ways to teach pronunciation to your students, adapting your methods to fit them and their needs, and helping them practice effectively to overcome any problems they might have (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

You also need to know these basic **principles** of teaching pronunciation:

• Include more than just "repeat after me." Having students listen to a recording or to the teacher's voice and then repeat is a useful part of a pronunciation lesson, but by itself it is not enough.

• Encourage students to use more than one of their senses, which is more effective anyway. We can use many different ways of learning—through sight, sound, and movement—to help students understand and remember better.

• Keep lessons practical. For most students, even adults, theory and technical explanations are hard to understand and are easily forgotten. Simple, concrete demonstrations followed by lots of practice produce better results. Lessons need to fit our students' level of understanding.

• Include communicative practice whenever possible. Students need to work toward using their new pronunciation in real speech. During class, we can help them practice in activities that are similar to real communication.

• Train students to become independent and autonomous learners. Our students won't be with us forever. Someday they'll be facing pronunciation puzzles on their own. If we can help them build up their own skills in listening, imitating, and monitoring their own pronunciation, it will be a big help to them in their future learning.

THEME: TEACHING SPEAKING

1. Definition and related theories
2. Developing speaking competence

1.Definition and related theories

Task 1: What problems are usually associated with teaching speaking as follows from the quotations below?

All my students can read and write well, but they are poor at speaking and listening.

Many of my students are too afraid to talk in class. They are shy and lack confidence.

Some of my students sound very "bookish" when they speak – it's as if they are reading from a book!

My students love to speak, but they make a lot of grammatical mistakes. (from Anne Burns)

Definitions

Speaking is a highly complex and dynamic skill that *involves* the use of several *simultaneous processes – cognitive, physical and socio-cultural –* and a speaker's knowledge and skills have to be activated rapidly in real-time. It is important, therefore, that *speaking should be taught explicitly* in language classrooms – simply "doing" speaking activities is not the same as learning the knowledge, skills and strategies of speaking.

Johnson (1996: 155) describes speaking as a "combinatorial skill" that "involves doing various things at the same time".

Second language speaking competence comprises **knowledge of language and discourse**, **core speaking skills**, and **communication and discourse strategies**. Learning to speak in a foreign language involves increasing the ability to use these components in order to produce spoken language in a fluent, accurate and socially appropriate way.

The first component, Knowledge of Language and Discourse, requires mastering the *sound* patterns of the language, knowing the *grammar* and *vocabulary* of the language (spoken structures, grammatical features, lexis) and understanding how stretches of connected speech (discourse, genre) are organised,

so that they are socially and pragmatically appropriate (register).

<u>Core Speaking Skills</u> mean developing the ability to process speech quickly to increase *fluency* (e.g. speech rate, chunking, pausing, formulaic language, discourse markers).

<u>Communication Strategies</u> involve developing *cognitive strategies to compensate for limitations in language knowledge* (e.g. circumlocution (a roundabout or indirect way of speaking; the use of more words than necessary to express an idea), paraphrasing, gestures, word coinage, approximation, avoidance), metacognitive strategies (e.g. planning in advance what to say, thinking consciously about how you say something), and interaction strategies (e.g. asking for clarification/ repetition, reformulating, rephrasing, and checking comprehension).

Related theories

- Dell Hymes introduced the term "communicative competence" in the mid 1960s arguing that the ability to speak competently does not only involve knowing about language forms and rules but also knowing what to say, how, to whom and in what circumstances.

- Canale and Swain (1980) define communicative competence as "the underlying systems of knowledge and skill for communication (e.g. knowledge of vocabulary and skill in using the sociolinguistic conventions for a given language) (Canale, 1983, p.5).

In Canale (1983) communication is understood as "the exchange and negotiation of information between at least 2 individuals through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, oral and written/visual modes, and production and comprehension processes" (p.4).

<u>Components of communicative competence:</u>

Grammatical competence: vocabulary, word and sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling, and semantics (meaning).

Sociolinguistic competence: the appropriateness of utterences in different sociolinguistic contexts.

Discourse competence: the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings into unified spoken and written texts – *cohesion* in form and *coherence* in meaning.

Strategic competence: the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies used by the speaker to overcome difficulties and avoid communication breakdown. (from E.H.Kontra)

Task 2: Can you explain what speaking competence involves?

2. Developing speaking competence

Comparing spoken and written language

Many approaches typically used in language teaching to *teach speaking* have taken little account of the nature of spoken language, and have tended instead to *fall back on grammars that are essentially based on written text*. Technological advances in recording speech and the establishment by linguists of corpora of speech utterances have led to much greater knowledge about the similarities and differences between these two modes of communication. It is very valuable for language teachers to be aware of some of the main differences and of the features that typically characterize speech, as this will allow them to make more informed decisions about what to teach.

McCarthy (1998: 79–80) makes the point that:

Anyone who has looked at large amounts of informal spoken data, for example, cannot fail to be struck by the *absence of well-formed 'sentences'* with main and subordinate clauses. Instead we often find turns that are just phrases, incomplete clauses, clauses that look like subordinate clauses but which seem not to be attached to any main clause, etc.

Although spoken and written language are clearly related, typically they serve different social purposes and have different audiences. Speakers and writers draw on common linguistic resources, but they utilise them in different ways; as Halliday (1985: 45) notes, "… the kinds of meanings that are transmitted in writing tend to be somewhat different from the kinds of meanings transmitted through speech". By way of illustration, compare the following texts, that deal with the same content and meanings. The speaker in Text 1 is describing the experience of studying in a Master's course offered as a distance learning program.

Text 1

I was working in Turkey at the time… um I was lucky enough to have one of my colleagues doing the same program… started at the same time as me so we used to get together regularly…er sometimes

as often as twice a week and would get together and compare our findings and…er because our learning styles were different as well, we, well, compensated for one another other…

Text 2 illustrates how this information might be expressed in a written version.

Text 2

I was then employed in Turkey, where fortunately I was able to collaborate with a colleague who commenced the program simultaneously. We held regular weekly meetings to compare findings. Because our learning styles were different, we complemented each other.

There are some noticeable differences in the way the meanings are 'packaged' in these two texts. *Speech* is constructed *spontaneously* and therefore shows particular patternings of language use that are not usually found in written texts.

Task 3: Describe typical features of written and spoken language. As a prospective language teacher, can you draw any inferences regarding teaching oral communication skills? (from Anne Burns)

Question: Recall a successful speaking activity in which you participated as a student. What are the characteristics of this activity that make you judge it "successful"? (from P.Ur)

Compare your ideas with those shown in the box below:

Characteristics of a successful speaking activity

1. *Learners talk a lot*. As much as possible of the period of time allotted to the aactivity is occupied by learner talk. This may seem obvious, but often most time is taken up with teacher talk or pauses.

2. *Participation is even*. Classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants: all students get a chance to talk, and contributions are evenly distibuted.

3. *Motivation is high*. Learners are eager to speak: because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it.

4. *Language is of an acceptable level*. Learners express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easily comprehensible to each other, and of an acceptable level of language accuracy.

In practice, however, few classroom activities succeed in satisfying all the criteria shown in the box.

Question: what are some of the problems in getting learners to talk in the classroom? Think back to your experiences as a learner.

Now look at the box below and see if any of the problems are the same as yours.

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Problems with speaking activities

1. *Inhibition*. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom: worries about making mistakes, fearful of citisism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.

2. *Nothing to say*. You often hear learners complain that they cannot think of anything to say.

3. *Low or uneven participation*. Only one participant can talk at a time. This problem is aggrevated by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while others speak very little or not at all.

4. *Mother-tongue use*. Students tend to switch to their mother-tongu, especially when talking in small groups.

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Follow-up discussion: Consider what you might do in the classroom in order to overcome each of the problems described above. You may wish to supplement your ideas with those suggested below.

What the teacher can do to help to solve some of the problems

Use group work. This increases the amount of learner talk and also lowers the inhibition of learners who are unwilling to talk in front of the full class. It is true that group work means that the teacher cannot supervise all learner speech, so that not all utterances will be correct, and learners may occasionally slip into their native language. Even so, the amount of time for useful oral practice will be more significant than in the full-class set-up.

Base the activity on easy language. The level of language needed for a discussion should be lower than that used in intensive language-learning activities in the same class. It is a good idea to teach or review essential vocabulary before the activity starts.

Make a careful choice of topic and task to stimulate interest.

Keep students speaking the target language. You might appoint one of the goup as monitor, whose job is to remind participants to use the target language.

ACTIVITIES

Revise

For questions 1–7, choose the best option (A, B or C) to complete each statement.

1. One of the best ways of provoking retrieval and use is through …
A learning and repeating. B pronunciation exercises. C communicative speaking activities.

2. When individual students are asked questions by other members of the class for a fixed period, we call the activity …
A a communicative speaking activity. B the hot seat. C pronunciation practice.

3. We should encourage students to develop their _____ so that they can practise language even when no one else is there.
A pronunciation B listening ability C inner voice

4. When we get students to speak and we try to insist on the language they should use, we call it a …
A practice activity. B communicative activity. C pronunciation activity.

5. We can dictate _____ to the class. The students complete them and then they can read out what they have written.
A words B paragraphs C sentence stems

6. Each number has a different topic. When a student throws the _____ they have to speak about the topic for that number.
A picture B dice C piece of paper

7. A discussion where students can decide what they want to say and what language they want to use is called a …
A practice activity. B communicative activity. C simulation.

1b) For questions 1–8, match the descriptions with the activities and roles A–H.
A. Buzz group

B. Formal debate

C. Panel discussion

D. Participant

E. Prompt cards

F. Prompter

G.Pyramid discussion

H. Reaching a consensus

1. For this kind of discussion there is someone to 'propose a motion', someone to 'oppose a motion', people to support them, and an audience who ask questions and make comments. The audience votes for or against the motion at the end.

2. A group of students discuss a situation or problem and have to agree together what to do about it.

3. Sometimes we can give students these to give them ideas about what to say – what opinions they can express, etc.

4. Sometimes, when students can't think of what to say, or the discussion slows down, or students can't think of the words, teachers have to act like this.

5. Students start in pairs. Then the pairs talk to other pairs. Then the groups of two pairs talk to another group of two pairs, and so on.

6. This is the role some teachers take in discussions when they talk together with the students and give their own opinions, etc.

7. This type of discussion is when four or five students talk about a topic as if they were experts on the subject (as in some TV programmes).

8. We use this type of activity when pairs or groups of students have quick discussions about something, for example a topic they are going to read about.

1c) For questions 1–9, match the descriptions with the activities A–I.

A. Oral presentation

B. Poster presentation

C. Roleplay

D. Story reconstruction

E. String things together

F. Taking time away

G. Truth and lies

H. What happens next

I. Simulation

1 Students have to tell a story a number of times and each time they tell it they have to do it more and more quickly.

2. Students imagine they are in a particular situation. They have to act and speak as if they were in that situation.

3. Students imagine they are in a particular situation. They have to act and speak as if they were in that situation, but they pretend to be someone else.

4. Students stand in front of graphics, pictures etc. and explain what they show or are demonstrating.

5. Students tell each other about something, often using presentation software such as Powerpoint.

6. Students tell each other things. The students who are listening have to decide which things are correct, which not.

7. Students are given different pictures. Then the pictures are taken away and the students have to work out how the pictures are connected.

8. Students are given a selection of pictures. They have to use them to tell a story.

9. The teacher shows a video clip to the students and then pauses it halfway through. Students have to make predictions about the rest of the clip.

Research

2a) Interview a few people who speak more than one language about their second/foreign language using the questions below.

1. Are you a confident speaker of your second/foreign language?

2. When are you most comfortable and least comfortable speaking that language?

3. What is your biggest fear and your biggest pleasure in speaking another language?

2b) You are going to analyse a group discussion.

1. Choose a situation which you can 'listen in to', ideally a group discussion in a language learning classroom. If you can't do this, try to listen to a group of people talking in a language that is foreign to most of them. If that isn't possible, you can listen to a group of friends or colleagues talking.

2. If you can, record part of the discussion. If you can't, just keep a note of what happens.

3. Record how many people there are in the group. Give each individual a name or a letter.

4. Make a mark (e.g. a tick) against an individual's name/letter every time that person speaks (and if possible how long they speak for).

5. Have a look at your results. How effective was the discussion? How much variety was there between how much each person spoke?

2c) Look at some coursebooks for teaching English and find examples of simulations.

1. What language do you think the simulations will produce?

2. How relevant or appropriate do you think the simulations are to the students they are designed for?

3. Do you think the simulations would be better with or without the students having a role? In other words, would they be better or worse off as themselves?

Reflect

3a) Think about when you speak a foreign language. When and how do you use your inner voice? How does it help you? Do you remember using your inner voice when you were learning the language?

3b) When students take part in classroom discussions in a foreign language, some students speak a lot, some are reluctant to speak and others hardly speak at all. What are the reasons for this, do you think? How can a teacher make things better? Can you think of one idea to try and make everyone speak?

3c) Think of oral presentations you have made or might have to make in the future and consider these questions.

1.Explain what speaking competence involves.

2.What is the role of speaking in the contemporary classroom? Substantiate your answer referring to relevant theories.

THEME 8: TEACHING THE RECEPTIVE SKILLS: READING

1. Definition and related theories
2. Principles of teaching reading
3. Teaching reading skills
4. Teaching reading strategies and skills

1. Definition and related theories

Definition

Reading is a *process of constructing meaning from written texts*. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of interrelated sources of information" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 6.)

"The *ability to read* requires that the *reader draw information from a text and combine it with information and experience that the reader already has*" (Grabe and Stoller, 2001, p.188).

Readers actively make sense of the text. This is exactly what schema theory contends.

Schema theory

Schema theory tries to explain how readers utilize prior knowledge to understand and get new information from the text (Rumelhart, 1980). The theory claims that written text does not carry meaning by itself. It only guides readers to retrieve or construct meaning from the structures or patterns of this prior knowledge. These structures are called schemata (singular: schema).

A text about transportation, for example, would trigger our schematic knowledge about the different types of transportation:

	Transportation	
Land	Air	Water
Bicycle	Airplane	Ship
Motorcycle	Jet	Cargo/container ship
Car	Helicopter	Sail boat
Van	Hot air balloon	Yacht
Bus	Space shuttle	Canoe
Train	Drone	Submarine
Subway	Glider	Aircraft carrier
	Blimp (дирижабль)	

In addition, before reading a passage about airports, as readers, we know that:
Airplanes can fly. They have wheels that they can land on. They can take passengers to different places. They have wings that make them fly. You have to check in before boarding…

Schema theory is closely related to two other important notions, namely top-down and bottom-up processing.

Task 1: Examining how we read

Stage 1. Look at the statements in the box below. Do you agree with them? Discuss these statements.

Some assumptions about the nature of reading

1. We need to percieve and decode letters in order to read words.
2. We need to understand all the words in order to understand the meaning of a text.
3. The more symbols (letters or words) there are in a text, the longer it will take to read it.
4. We gather meaning from what we read.
5. Our understanding of a text comes from understanding the words of which it is composed.

Stage 2. Drawing conclusions.

1. When beginning to read a text, we depend on decoding letters to understand words; but as soon as there is meaningful context we bring our own interpretation to the word according to its general "shape" and the sense of the text rather than according to its letters. Thus, reading activities should stress reading for understanding rather than decoding of letters.

2. We need to understand some words in order to understand the meaning of a text, but by no means all: we often "skip" or misread words in order to make sense of the whole more quickly. The implication of this for teaching is that we should not instist too strongly on our learners understanding every word, but rather encourage them to go for the overall meaning of a text.

3. the more sense units there are in a text, the longer it will take to read it. If smaller sense units (words, sentences) are combined into bigger, coherent ones (paragraphs), the whole is much faster to read than if they are separate.

4. and 5. The process of reading is defined as "constructing" meaning from a text. It is a combination of "bottom-up" processes (understanding words, sentences etc) and "top-down" ones (our previous knowledge, expectations etc).

Cognitive processing: Top-down vs bottom-up processing

Top-down processing refers to *the use of background knowledge to predict the meaning of the reading* or listening text. For example, readers develop hypotheses about the content of a text, which they have to confirm or reject while reading. The uptake of information is thus guided by an individual's prior knowledge and expectations.

Bottom-up processing, however, *relies on the actual words or sounds*. That is, *students construct meaning from the most basic units of language, including letters, letter clusters, and words*.

Teachers who encourage bottom-up processing, emphasize the decoding skills. They are not concerned with guiding learners recognize what they, as readers, brought to the understanding of the text.

To use the metaphor of the wall, with the top-down processing, you see the wall as a whole; you are not concerned with the different bricks that constitute the wall. By contrast, with the bottom-up processing, the focus is on the bricks of the wall.

Current views

Much of what we know about reading comes <u>from L1 research</u>. There are several, often conflicting theories, but current research generally views reading as an interactive, socio-cognitive process (Bernhardt, 1991), which involves <u>3 participants</u>: <u>a reader, a text and a social context</u>. This means that the <u>reader</u> constantly <u>interacts with the text in order to construct meaning</u>, and this interaction is influenced by his/her past experiences, knowledge of the world, social and cultural context and purpose of reading.

According to the latest theories in psycholinguistics (Scovel, 1998), reading and listening constitute a parallel interactive process in which context and background information are used already in the recognition of letters and sounds, but "play a particularly conspicuous role in the comprehension of words and sentences" (p.55).

Recent research questions the usefulness of the top-down approach, and emphasises the contribution of bottom-up processing to fluent reading. Paran (1990) points out that the more advanced a reader is, the less he relies on guessing, context and background knowledge. "Good readers may have greater awareness of context – but they do not need to use it while they are reading" (p.28).

According to Alderson (2000), both top-down and bottom-up information is important in reading, and the balance between the two varies with text, reader and purpose.

The interactive model

The interactive model (Rumelhart, 1977; Stanovich, 1980, cited in Abraham, 2000) stressed both what is on the written page and what a reader brings to it <u>using both top-down and bottom-up skills</u>. Teachers who adopt the interactive approach acknowledge that there is an interaction between both the text and the reader in the reading process.

When both top-down and bottom-up techniques are used consciously by learners, they become effective strategies to get the most of a text.

Reading as a complex, multi-level process:

Grabe (1991) lists 6 skills and knowledge areas that readers activate:

- Automatic letter and word recognition skills
- Vocabulary and structural knowledge
- Formal discourse structure knowledge
- Content/world background knowledge
- Synthesis and evaluation skills/strategies
- Metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring (i.e. skimming, previewing, formulating questions about information, recognising problems, etc.)

Intensive and extensive reading

A distinction is made in the literature between two forms of reading: intensive and extensive reading.

Intensive reading involves the deconstruction of a text. The aim is to get as much information as possible. By reading intensively, we are concerned with <u>every detail related to the text</u>. The learner is encouraged to deal with vocabulary and grammar activities to get a closer understanding of the text.

Extensive reading, however, refers to simply <u>reading as much as possible, without concerning oneself with every detail</u>. Occasional unknown words are not supposed to get too much attention because focus is on the overall meaning. That is to say, intensive readers look up words only when they deem it absolutely necessary to their understanding of the text.

Questions: 1. What exactly do you do when you read a text in any language?

2. When can you say that you understand a text?

a. if you understand the meaning of each word in it

b. if you understand each sentence

c. if you can fulfil the reading purpose

d. if you can read it out with correct pronunciation

3. Does the ability to read in the L1 have any influence on reading abilities in the L2?

4. What does text difficulty depend on?

2. Principles of teaching reading

According to Nation (2009), teaching reading should follow specific principles that help boost the reading skills.

1. Reading is a purposeful enterprise

Training students to develop their reading skills should be done to fulfill a range of <u>purposes</u>:

- To <u>search for</u> specific <u>information</u> through skimming and scanning activities.
- To learn and <u>gain knowledge</u> about different topics
- To <u>be entertained</u>
- To <u>react</u> to a text and have a say about its content.

2. Appropriateness to students' level

Reading activities should be appropriate to students' level of language proficiency. Teachers should use <u>simplified texts that are slightly **above** their level</u>.

3. Vocabulary knowledge

As far as vocabulary is concerned, students should: "read with 98 percent coverage of vocabulary in the text so that they can learn the remaining 2 percent guessing from context." (Nation, 2009, p. 6)

4. Integrative of skills

Reading activities should <u>integrate other skills</u>. Incorporation of <u>speaking</u>, listening and writing activities are highly advised. These activities should be assigned at the pre-, while, or post-reading stages.

5. Reading skills

The focus should be also on developing reading skills such as <u>phonemic awareness, spelling practice, vocabulary learning, and grammar study</u>.

6. Reading strategies

<u>A reading strategy is a conscious plan that good readers adopt to understand a text</u>. By becoming aware of these purposeful strategies, learners may get full control of reading comprehension. Accordingly, teachers should train learners to acquire **reading strategies** such as: Previewing, Setting a purpose, Predicting, Asking questions, Connecting to background knowledge, Paying attention to text structure, Guessing words from context, Reflecting on the text and reacting to it.

7. Text type

Gaining knowledge about text type is another area that learners should be trained at. They should be able to differentiate between **genres** of texts: emails, reports, stories, newspaper articles, scientific texts.

8. Reading a lot

Learners must be also <u>encouraged to read a lot</u>. Extensive reading helps them become fluent and develop speed at reading different texts, a competency much needed for academic success and in students' future careers.

3. Teaching reading skills

How to teach reading skills depends on which objectives the teacher aims at developing in his/her students and on how lesson plans are structured. To this effect, teachers must take decisions about the the **objectives** of their their reading comprehension lesson.

- Reading for gist (general meaning)?
- Reading for specific information?

- Reading for detailed comprehension?
- Developing speed reading?
- Training learners on specific reading strategies?
- Inferring meaning from context?
- A combination of the above goals?

How to teach reading relies also on the way the lesson is structured. In fact, any reading lesson plan should include three **stages**:

- Pre-reading stage
- While reading stage
- Post-reading stage

Pre-reading stage

According to the constructivists, we construct new knowledge by relying on our prior knowledge. Being able to decode the information from the text is insufficient. Teachers should encourage learners to utilize their own world knowledge and worldview to make sense of the text. This knowledge, which is often referred to as schema (see above), is the essential condition for the process of construction of meaning.

Pre-reading activities are an essential part of the reading lesson because of the following:
- They help students be more prepared for what they are about to read.
- Formulating expectations about the content of the text help learners prepare themselves for the kind of language, vocabulary, and even grammar that might be used in the text.
- These activities create the need for reading the text to know more about a topic.
- By creating the need to learn more about the topic, these activities increase students' motivation and interest.

Teachers must activate students' knowledge about the topic of the text they are about to read using the following activities:

Brainstorming

In groups, students brainstorm ideas relating to the topic of the text. All members of the groups contribute to the generation of ideas about the topic. All ideas are to be accepted. After generating

enough ideas, groups organize their ideas and form sentences. Finally, they share their ideas with the whole class. This procedure can also be done as a whole class activity.

Discussions

The teacher prepares contrasting opinions about the topic of the text, or simply provides a quote related to the topic of the reading. Students work in groups to discuss and react to these opinions or quote. They then write a short report to be read by the representative of each group. Groups react to each other's opinions.

Predicting

The teacher can prepare the learners to predict what the text will be about using different elements of the text: The teacher raises the learners' attention to only the title, the subheadings, the pictures, and/or the illustrations accompanying the text. They have a discussion in groups to predict the topic.Groups report their predictions.

While-reading activities

While-reading activities are activities that help students focus on text features and its comprehension. In addition to guiding students towards a better understanding of the text, these activities aim at:

- Connecting students prior knowledge with the content of the reading,
- Helping them gain new knowledge,
- Training them to deal with similar texts in the future.

The following are a few examples of while reading activities:

Skimming

Skimming the text to check predictions is a while-reading activity that is an extension of some pre-reading activities. Skimming can be defined as <u>reading a text quickly to get a general idea</u> of the passage. Students do not have to read everything. Skimming involves among other things:

- Reading the title, the headings and the subheadings.
- Reading the introduction or the first paragraph.
- Reading the topic sentence of each paragraph.
- Looking at pictures, charts, or graphs.

- Paying attention to italicized or boldface words or phrases.
- Reading the concluding paragraph.

Scanning

Scanning refers to reading in order to find specific information such as a name, a date, or a number. This is a technique used when one is interested in finding specific information quickly.

As a teacher, you may want to ask your students to scan a text to find answers to (a) specific question(s).

With these questions in mind, your students read the text to attempt to find answers to only these questions.

They may ignore irrelevant information.

Students may use headings and any other clues that will help them identify which part of the text might contain the needed information. In other words, they will have to read selectively and skip through irrelevant sections of the text.

Comprehension questions

Most textbooks include comprehension questions that students have to answer while they are reading.

Post reading activities

Post-reading activities help learners summarize their learning, get a deeper understanding, and organize their thoughts and ideas. Here are examples of these activities.

Discussion

Groups react to the content of the passage. Each group reports to the other groups a summary of their findings followed by whole class discussion.

Summarizing

As a post reading activity, teachers may ask students to write a summary of the main points of a text. Chambers and Brigham (1989, cited in Nation, 2009), report an interesting strategy to help learners summarize a passage. This strategy is called summary by deletion. This involves the following steps:

- Students read the passage and delete all the sentences that merely elaborate the main sentences;

- They delete all unnecessary clauses and phrases from the main sentences;
- They delete all unnecessary words from what remains;
- They replace the remaining words with their own expressions;
- They write a final draft of the summary.

Retelling the story

Retelling the story would help learners to talk about the content of the passage. It is an opportunity for the teacher to integrate the speaking skill within the reading activity.

Think-Pair-Share

This is an excellent activity to help learners summarize what they learned and discuss it with other peers.

Students write down their thoughts on the topic of the passage. Then, they discuss with a partner. Finally, they share with the whole class.

Search quest

After reading the text, the teacher encourages the students to conduct a search quest to find out more about the topic of the text.

Vocabulary work

To gain cognitive depth of the vocabulary learned, students have to be encouraged to work on the newly acquired lexical items:

Students identify the newly acquired words in the passage. They quiz each other on the parts of speech and meaning of these words.

Students choose 10 words from the text, which they have to use to produce 10 sentences or to write a piece of writing that is related to the topic.

Peer testing

Students work in pairs or in groups. They have to prepare questions about the text they have just read.

The members of each pair or each group will have to answer.

Some Reading procedures

The following are some famous reading procedures that were developed to help learners deal with reading comprehension.

SQ3R: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review

Students have first to survey the assigned reading by first skimming through it.

1. The second step consists of encouraging learners to formulate questions by converting headings and subheadings into questions to be answered while reading or by asking more general question such as "what is this section about?"
2. Then, students read the text and try to answer the questions they generated previously.
3. After that, the students must be encouraged to recite the information from memory.
4. Finally, the students should review their questions, and see if they can answer them all easily. Otherwise, they should go back and follow the previous reading steps.

Standard reading exercise

Standard reading exercise consists of teaching learners a series of questions that can be used with any text. The questions are meant to train the learners to the most important reading skills, such as predicting, finding the main idea of each paragraph, identifying the writer's purpose, thinking critically about the content of the text, etc. (Nation, 2009, p. 37).

Reciprocal teaching

Palincsar and Brown (1986, cited in Nation, 2009) designed a procedure which they coined "reciprocal teaching". In this procedure, the teacher trains the learners to use four main strategies, which could be applied to any text:

- The students predict the content of the paragraph before reading it;
- They make questions focusing on the main idea of the paragraph;
- They summarize what has just been read;
- They seek clarification on difficult points in the paragraph.

4. Teaching reading strategies and skills

There are fundamental differences between reading strategies and reading skills.

"**Reading strategies** are deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader's efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text. **Reading skills** are automatic actions that result in decoding and comprehension with speed, efficiency, and fluency and usually occur without awareness of the components or control involved." Afflerbach et al. (2008)

A skill is an unconscious ability or proficiency. It works without the reader's intentional control and operates automatically. Strategies, on the other hand, are conscious plans or deliberately chosen tactics that help readers solve a reading problem. Being aware of the processes involved in the reading task means that readers select an intended objective, the means to attain that objectives and the processes used to achieve it. To use a metaphor, it is helpful to see the skills as the target and the strategies as the journey or the process towards that target.

Reading strategies

Predicting Using information or elements from a passage (e.g. title, headings, pictures, diagrams, words in bold type,…) and personal knowledge to anticipate what the text is about.

Skimming Reading a text quickly to get its *general idea* (i.e. to get the gist) of the content.

Scanning Reading a text quickly to locate a specific fact or piece of information. This may be a date, a name or a figure… This strategy is also referred to as *reading for specific details.*

Previewing Previewing or surveying consists of having an idea about the content and goals of a reading text before starting to read. To do so, readers look at the title, sub-titles, a picture or read the first sentence of each paragraph.

Questioning Generating questions about the text and the writer's intentions. This helps learners get engaged actively with a text instead of reading it passively.

Making connections Readers relate the content of the passage to self, to other texts or to the world. Good readers take advantage of the connections they make between the current passage with:

- Their personal experiences (text-to-self),
- The content from other texts (text-to-text),
- Their knowledge about the world (text-to-world).

Inferring Making meaning of the text by reading between the lines and using personal knowledge. The aim is to construct meaning beyond what is literally expressed. By inferring, readers are adding information that is not explicitly stated.

Summarizing Summarizing consists of giving a brief statement of a text (using one's own words) by identifying the most important points. This strategy helps learners integrate the main ideas in a meaningful way.

Using background knowledge Using what is already known to better understand something new. By activating prior knowledge, readers try to make sense out of what they read by seeing how it fits with what they already know.

Recalling Relying on memory to retrieve a specific piece of information or a general idea from a text/ retelling the content of a text without going back to it

Evaluating Critically reflecting on and judging the author's purpose, attitude, opinion, etc.

ACTIVITIES

1. a) For questions 1–9, complete the sentences with words and phrases from the list below.

bottom-up processing, comprehensible input, drop everything and read, gist, extensive reading, graded readers, intensive reading, scanning, skimming, specific information, top-down processing

1. _____ are books written especially for students at different levels.

2. DEAR – when we get everyone (including the teacher) to read at the same time – stands for _____.

3. Extensive reading gives students _____ – provided that they can more or less understand what they are reading.

4. Some students find it difficult to read for gist because they insist on _____ – trying to understand every word in front of them.

5. We ask students to do _____ when we get them to try and read for gist without trying to understand every single word.

6. We usually ask students to do _____ in the classroom so that they can concentrate on the text.

7. When students read for a particular piece of information we call it reading for _____. We use the word _____ to describe this.

8. When students read for pleasure, often outside the classroom and in their own time, we call it _____.

9. When we get students to read a text quickly so that they get the main ideas, we call it _____. It is also referred to as reading for _____.

1.b) For questions 1–14, complete the text with words and phrases from the list below. You will have to use two of the words or phrases more than once.

buzz groups, charts, extracts, first, jigsaw reading, paragraph, pictures, predict, questions, text, topic

We can ask student to look at (1) _____ before they read a text. They can (2) _____ what they are going to read. This helps them to 'get ready' for the (3) _____, and reminds them of the things they know about the (4) _____. Sometimes we can get students to read (5) _____ about the text before they read the text itself, and this too helps them to predict what is coming.

There are other things we can do: for example, we can get students to read the (6) _____ sentence or (7) _____ of a text and ask them to guess what comes next. We can put students in (8) _____, tell them what the topic of the text is, and ask them to talk about what they expect in the text. When students are reading the text they can do things such as put (9) _____ about the text in order. They can also transfer information from the text into (10) _____. We can ask them to say whether they like the (11)

_____ or not. We can ask students to do (12) _____. That is where each of them gets a different part of the text and they have to work out the whole (13) _____ by talking about the different (14) _____ they have read.

1.c) For questions 1–9, match the first halves of sentences with their completions A–I.

1. Find parts of the text which

2. Get into groups and act out

3. Get into groups and discuss

4. Get into pairs and

5. I want you to match the vocabulary definitions

6. I want you to imagine that you are an expert about the topic of the text

7. I want you to tell the story of the text

8. Look at the numbers in the text and

9. Look through the text and find sentences

A. and have to answer questions about it.

B. compare your answers to the questions.

C. contradict the following statements.

D. from the different points of view of the characters in the story.

E. decide what they refer to.

F. the main opinion in the text.

G. the scene in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the text.

H. which have the word if in them.

I. with the words in blue in the text.

Research

2a) Find some English language graded readers to look at, either by visiting a book store, a school or by visiting the websites of publishers.

1 How many graded readers can you find?

2 What kind of books are they: factual, original fiction, re-told classic stories, etc.?

3 Which of them would you yourself like to read?

4 If you can, read an extract from one of the graded readers. What do you think of it? Will students be able to understand it at that level?

2. b) Choose one of the following tasks.

1 Find three texts that you could use with students of English at intermediate level or above. What prediction activities could you ask students to do so that they are well-prepared to read the text?

2 Look at one or two coursebooks for teaching English. Make a list of the 'before reading' exercises you find. How many different types are there?

2c) Find an English language text from a newspaper or magazine or on the Internet that you could use with upper intermediate or advanced students. Look carefully at the language (grammar, vocabulary, etc.) in the text. What is worth mining?

Reflect

3. a) Think of a group of students (decide on their age, level, reasons for learning English, etc.).

1. What reading do they (probably) do in the different parts of their daily life (professional, educational, personal)?

2. How likely is it that they read 'for pleasure' in their personal lives (i.e. extensive reading)?

3. What implications does this have for teaching reading to these students of English?

3. b) What advice could you offer to students to help them predict the content of an English language novel or magazine/news article?

3. c) When you were learning a foreign language in school, what kind of reading did the teacher ask you to do? How useful did you find it? What other kinds of reading would you have liked to do to help you become a better reader?

THEME 9: TEACHING THE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS: WRITING

1. Definition and purpose of teaching writing
2. Approaches to the teaching of writing

Discussion:

1. Writing is usually thought to be the most difficult skill to acquire and should only be taught after students have learned the other skills. Do you agree? Explain.

2. Writing is a matter of putting together strings of grammatically correct sentences. Do you agree with this statement?

3. Reflect on your experience as a second/foreign language learner. Did you have problems in expressing your ideas in writing? What were those problems? How did you deal with those problems?

4. Do you write a lot in your native language? Is it difficult to write in your own language? What kinds of problems do you have when you write? Do these problems have to do with vocabulary, syntax, or organization?

5. How important are the following processes in writing: planning, drafting, editing, and rewriting?

1. Definition and purpose of teaching writing

Definition

There is no doubt that writing is the <u>most difficult skill for L2 learners</u> to master. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. The skills involved in writing are highly complex. L2 writers have to pay attention to higher level skills of planning and organizing as well as lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on. The difficulty becomes even more pronounced if their language proficiency is weak.

Question: Why is writing so notoriously difficult for L2 learners?

What memories do you have of learning to write in English or in any other foreign language? Did you find it difficult? How did you deal with those difficulties?

Writing a purposeful human *activity* whereby the writer *communicates content* – represented with conventional signs and symbols – *to an audience* (i.e. *reader*).

In the above definition five elements are of paramount importance: *the writer (who), content (what), purpose (why), audience (for whom), medium (signs and symbols)*

In addition to the above elements, writing involves many <u>processes</u>, including, the *generation and organization of ideas, drafting, revising and editing*.

Task 1: Single out the main components of writing on the basis of the suggested definition.

Purpose

- to communicate with a reader

- to express ideas without the pressure of face-to-face communication

- to generate thinking

- to explore a subject

- to reinforce language: grammatical structures, vocabulary, idioms etc.

- to generate language: words, sentences, and longer chunks (Raimes, 1983, 1985)

Question: What is the purpose of student writing in L2?

2. Approaches to the teaching of writing

<u>The Audiolingual method</u>

- Writing is seen as *a means of reinforcing speech*;

- Errors have to be prevented and eliminated: emphasis on *accuracy rather than fluency* or originality;

- The teaching of writing is *sequential*: sentence exercises, paragraphs to copy, complete or manipulate grammatically, combine sentences, perform prescribed operations on given material. Free compositions are allowed at intermediate or advanced level.

<u>Guided Writing</u>

Students are given a *model*, usually a paragraph. This is followed by comprehension questions to be answered by the students. Then, using some recommended phrases, the students write a similar paragraph in response to a set of guiding questions.

The Pattern/Product Approach

- The focus is shifted from writing sentences to producing <u>coherent discourse</u>, to teaching the logic of organisational patterns: *thesis statement (summary of the main idea), topic sentence, paragraph unity, and organisational strategies*.

- writing <u>exercises</u> are generally <u>pattern based</u>: reordering scrambled paragraphs, writing topic sentence for given paragraphs from which the topic sentence has been removed, identifying irrelevant sentences, etc.

Process Writing

- Focus on <u>personal writing, student creativity</u>, and the development of a personal narrative voice;

- Key elements: time and feedback on content.

- Stages: generate ideas, explore topic, discover new ideas, write first draft, receive feedback, revise, write second draft.

- The writing process becomes a process of discovery of new ideas and the new language forms to express those ideas.

- The first piece of writing is not graded or corrected; the reader responds to the content, to the ideas expressed in the composition.

- Benefit: lowered anxiety level.

- Frequently used activities: brainstorming, pre-writing discussion, free writing, journal writing, and peer review.

Principles of teaching writing in the *Communicative Approach*

- use of *real and purposeful* activities

- ensuring the *authenticity* of texts and tasks

- taking account of the reader (*audience expectations*)

- considering *learner needs*

- striking a balance between *process and product* writing

Task 2: Study the following approaches to teaching writing and analyse their basic features and techniques.

Writing vs speaking

Compared to the speaking skill, writing is more regulated. First, speech is often spontaneous and generally unplanned. Speakers have support from interlocutors to convey the message. That is, while you speak, the immediate audiences contribute to the conversation by nodding, interrupting, questioning and commenting to keep the conversation going. Speech is also characterized by repetition, pauses, hesitations, para-language features (gestures, facial expressions etc.), and fillers (uhuh, ummm). By contrast, writing has more standard forms of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. It is generally planned and can be subject to modification through editing and revision before an audience reads it. In addition to that, writing does not tolerate repetition and if there is a response to a written message, it is generally delayed. Last but not least, writers use a lot of cohesive devices (e.g. however, in addition, in conclusion, etc.) that contribute to the overall coherence of the text.

Task 3: Contrast features of writing and speaking by filling in the table.

Writing	Speaking

Functional categories

When talking about the purpose of writing, we are in fact implying that writing has a functional **role**. This may include: *Sequencing, Comparing and contrasting, Talking about cause and effect, Describing, Defining, Expressing an opinion, Arguing, Persuading*

Levels of writing

Learners should be trained to develop different language subskills. The knowledge that they should develop ranges <u>from handwriting skills and mechanics to the ability to produce a coherent writing</u>. Other types of knowledge include vocabulary, grammar, and paragraph structure. The use of

cohesive devices (e.g. however, nevertheless, but, etc.) are also of paramount importance for good writers.

Figure 1: Levels of writing (how to teach writing)

Writing activities

Writing tasks can be represented in a continuum that ranges from **controlled** activities to **freer** ones.

Controlled writing   Copying   Filling the blanks   … Parallel writing   Creative writing   **Free Writing**

The writing task in the classroom can be also seen either as a learning tool (i.e. writing for learning) or as representing one of the main syllabus components (i.e. writing for writing) (Harmer, 2004).

Writing for learning

Writing for learning concerns those activities that necessitate the involvement of the students in some form of writing:

Grammar: providing examples of the target structures, gap filling, transformation exercises etc

Reading: answering the comprehension questions, summarizing etc

Speaking: preparing a conversation before an oral performance, jotting down ideas for subsequent discussion about a topic.

All the above activities are not part of a self-contained writing lesson. Writing in these activities is just a by-product of the work on other language components.

Writing for writing

Writing for writing refers to the writing lesson as a major syllabus strand. It is a self-contained writing lesson that aims at developing the writing skill. There are three approaches to teaching writing:

- Writing as a product.
- Writing as a process.
- Genre writing.

Product writing

The product writing approach refers to a writing procedure with an end product in mind. In this approach, the students are encouraged to *mimic a model text*. Analysis of the model text focuses on the linguistic features (e.g. prepositions, tense, adverbs etc). Attention is paid to the accuracy of the students' production.

- The teacher provides a model text.
- Analysis of the linguistic features of the model text.
- The students are encouraged to mimic the model text.
- The writing is done with an end product in mind.
- The teacher evaluates the students on the final product they have handed in.
- Focus is on form and accuracy

Process writing

As its name implies, process writing focuses on the process a writer goes through before producing a piece of writing:

"…process writing in the classroom may be construed as a program of instruction which provides the students with a series of planned learning experiences to help them understand the nature of writing at every point."(Anthony Sewo, 2002, p.315)

In this approach, the learners are encouraged to go through different stages before producing their final version. Generally speaking, four stages are identified in this process: *Planning, Drafting, Revising, Editing*

Planning

At the pre-writing stage, the learners are encouraged to gather as much information about the topic as possible through activities such as: brainstorming, quick writing, answers to questions, discussions etc

After generating enough ideas about the topic, the learners sort and organize them into an outline, preferably a visual diagram.

Drafting

Drafting is the <u>first attempt at writing</u>. When the learners have gathered enough ideas about the topic they start writing the first draft paying attention to the following points:

At this stage, focus is on the fluency of writing;

The learners should not be preoccupied too much with accuracy;

While drafting, the audience should be taken into consideration because having the audience in mind gives direction to the writing.

There might be some kind of response to the students' drafts either from other peers or from the teacher. This can be in the form of quick oral or written initial reaction to the draft.

Revising

Revising is not merely checking for <u>language errors</u>. It is rather a <u>look at the</u> <u>overall content and organization of ideas</u>. Using the feedback from their peers or from the teacher, the learners check whether their writing communicates meaning effectively to the intended audience. For example, some ideas may be discarded while others may be improved. The structure of paragraphs might also be affected during revision and the overall organization may be refined to convey coherent content.

Editing

Once the learners have finished revising, they start tidying up their drafts. This can be done by the learners themselves (i.e. self-editing) or with the help of their peers (i.e. peer editing). The focus is on elements like: choice of words, grammar (tense, sentence structure, prepositions etc), punctuation.

A <u>checklist</u> may be provided to this effect:

Is the choice of vocabulary items appropriate? Are the verbs in the correct tense? Have you checked the subject-verb agreement? Have you used correct sentence structures? Are the prepositions correctly used?

Figure 2 below, shows the different steps in process writing. As it can be seen, the <u>process is not linear; it is rather recursive</u> (doing the same thing several times).

"…many good writers employ a recursive, non-linear approach – writing of a draft may be interrupted by more planning, and revision may lead to reformulation, with a great deal of recycling to earlier stages." (Krashen, 1984, p. 17. Cited in Anthony Sewo, 2002, p.315)
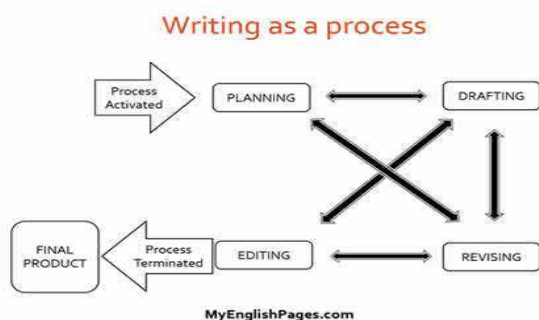

Figure 2: Process Writing (How to teach writing)

Genre writing

Recent studies on the genres of writing have revived interest in some features of the product approach. Genre writing is similar to the product approach in the sense that it also considers writing from a linguistic standpoint. Nevertheless, there is a major difference between the genre and product approaches. The genre approach, unlike the product approach, focuses on the social context in which writing is produced. As mentioned above, *texts can be classified into different genres and are normally written for different social purposes.* Consequently, each genre (e.g. *email, formal letters, storytelling*, etc.) has its own common conventional features and the <u>teachers' role is to raise the students' awareness of these features</u> and <u>help them learn how to produce texts with the same features</u>.

Practically, the genre approach draws on <u>Vygotsky's social constructivism</u> which considers language as a consequence of human interaction. The procedure is based on three major <u>stages</u>: <u>awareness raising, appropriation, and autonomy</u>. During the lesson, <u>scaffolding</u> is provided. That is, the teacher provides support for learners as they progress in their linguistic competence and become independent.

Awareness raising

The first stage consists of having the students <u>look</u>, for example, <u>at</u> <u>text models</u> of a specific genre. The aim is to make them aware of what constitutes that particular genre. To that effect, different text models of the same genre are provided to the students for analysis and distinctive <u>features should be identified</u>.

Appropriation

At this stage, support is provided when needed while the learners <u>practice the target genre</u> distinctive features : the linguistic properties, layout, organization etc.

Collaborative work may play an important role at this stage. A text may be jointly constructed by learners and teacher (Hammond, 1987).

Autonomy

At this stage, the learners are given enough time to <u>independently construct their own texts</u>. Guidance may be needed for students with limited control of language.

Questions: 1. What is process writing? Is the process approach sufficient to produce competent writers? Is the approach appropriate for beginners as well as more advanced learners?

2. One of the criticisms against process writing is that it takes up a lot of classroom time to teach process skills. As a result, students do not get much writing done. Do you agree with this?

3. What is meant by a genre approach to teaching writing? In what ways does knowledge of different text types contribute to learners' growing competence in writing?

Feedback

Investigating how ESL learners processed teacher feedback on compositions, Cohen (1987) found:

-that <u>most teacher feedback</u> dealt with <u>grammar and mechanics</u> (spelling, punctuation);

-that <u>teachers often misunderstood</u> or misinterpreted student writing;

-that teacher's comments (e.g."confusing", "not clear") and symbols (e.g. arrows) were often <u>unclear for the students</u>;

-that most students only made a "mental note" of teachers' comments and very few of them actually rewrote their papers.

Investigating "multiple draft" composition classrooms, Ferris (1995) got more positive results regarding student reactions to teacher feedback:

-students paid more attention to feedback on earlier drafts than on final drafts;

-apart from feedback on grammar, they received many comments also on content and organistaion;

-many students reported having received positive comments from their teachers, but a few wrote that they never did and they found this discouraging.

The teacher's role when giving feedback

- become the reader <u>responding to content</u>

- act as writing <u>consultant</u>, making helpful suggestions regarding the process of revision

- <u>encourage</u> students; make positive comments and make students feel that they can improve

Questions:

-To what extent should teacher's feedback on student writing focus on grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organisation, content or style?

- What are the possible benefits of students giving feedback on each other's written work?

ACTIVITIES

Task: 1. *a) For questions 1–9, complete the sentences with words and phrases from the list below.*

Accuracy, audience, draft, edit, final version, handwriting, nuts and bolts (basic practical details), planning, respond, review, the writing process

1. _____ is more important in writing than in speaking since we cannot change things once they have been finalised.

2. _____ involves various stages such as planning, reviewing and editing.

3. Before starting to write, people often go through a _____ stage.

4. Even in the digital age, _____ is still important because people judge you by it.

5. It is important for students to master the _____ of writing.

6. When teachers are looking at students' work during the writing process, they should _____ to what the students have written, rather than correct.

7. When we have edited our drafts we can write our _____.

8. When we have written the first _____ of some writing we need to _____ it so that we can _____ it.

9. When we write we have to think of the _____ we are writing for.

2.a) Look at as many coursebooks for teaching English as you can and answer the following questions.

1. How much writing practice is there? Is there writing in every unit?

2. Does the writing practice ask the students to be involved in the writing process, or does it just tell students to write something?

3. Are the writing exercises focused on teaching the skill of writing or do they appear to be designed mainly for language practice?

3.To what extent do you agree with these statements?

1. The skill of writing cannot be taught.
2. Writing is for creative types.
3. Writing a shopping list is writing.

4. Most people cannot write well in their first language.

5. Writing a CV is writing.

6. Most people do not write letters to their grandparents

7. Non-native speakers write letters to most of their friends in L1.

8. Writing should be done as homework.

9. Teachers should correct all the mistakes in a text created by a student.

10. Writing instructions for a piece of equipment or software is writing

11. Writing is a process.

12. Writing is above all an opportunity to practice grammar.

13. A person's writing can improve if they are given good guidance.

14. Students do not learn from a teacher's corrections.

15. Students gain a lot from keeping a journal in their L2.

16. Students can correct each other's writing.

17. Observing the features of model texts helps learners improve.