



THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF LEARNING AND LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on key theories of learning and teaching approaches for modern foreign languages. It examines Behaviorism, Constructivism, Social Learning Theory, Cognitive Load Theory, and Humanistic Learning Theory, presenting each with its strengths and limitations in educational settings. The article also explores specific language teaching approaches, such as Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching, highlighting their unique perspectives. It concludes by emphasizing the interconnectedness of these theories and approaches and their relevance in Uzbekistan's classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to choose theories and approaches based on student needs and learning contexts, with the goal of enhancing language learning experiences.

INTRODUCTION.

Understanding the diverse theories of learning and approaches to teaching is pivotal in shaping effective educational practices. Theoretical frameworks, such as behaviorism, constructivism, and cognitive load theory, offer insights into how individuals acquire knowledge. Concurrently, teaching approaches, ranging from Direct Instruction to Communicative Language Teaching, provide educators with a plethora of strategies to facilitate learning.

1.1. Significance of the Topic:

The significance of exploring learning theories and teaching approaches lies in their direct impact on educational outcomes. Different individuals respond uniquely to varied methodologies, and educators must navigate this complexity. A solid grasp of learning theories equips teachers with the ability to tailor their approaches, fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

These theories also underpin instructional strategies, influencing how educators design curricula, assess student progress, and create engaging learning experiences. A nuanced



understanding of these theories allows educators to develop holistic and adaptable teaching practices.

1.2. Objectives of the Study:

1. To Explore Major Learning Theories:

- Uncover the foundational theories of behaviorism, constructivism, social learning, cognitive load, and humanistic learning.
- Understand the key principles advocated by prominent theorists such as B.F. Skinner, Jean Piaget, Albert Bandura, John Sweller, and Abraham Maslow.

2. To Examine Strengths and Limitations:

- Analyze the strengths and limitations of each learning theory, providing educators with insights into their applicability.
- Acknowledge the multifaceted nature of learning and recognize that a combination of theories may be necessary.

3. To Investigate Language Teaching Approaches:

- Explore various language teaching approaches, including Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, and the Lexical Approach.
- Understand the unique principles and methods associated with each approach and their implications for language instruction.

4. To Identify Strengths and Limitations in Language Teaching Approaches:

- Examine the strengths and limitations of language teaching approaches, allowing educators to make informed choices based on their context and goals.
- Recognize the importance of adapting teaching methods to the specific needs of learners, promoting a dynamic and responsive educational environment.

5. To Provide a Global Perspective:

- Highlight the universal applicability of these theories and approaches, emphasizing their relevance across diverse cultural and linguistic settings.
- Foster an understanding that effective education is a dynamic interplay between theories, approaches, and the unique context of each learning environment.

Understanding the diverse theories of learning and teaching approaches is essential for creating effective educational strategies. This chapter delves into key learning theories and teaching approaches that shape the foundation of modern education. From behaviorism to communicative language teaching, the exploration encompasses various perspectives that influence how individuals acquire, process, and retain knowledge and skills.

1.3. Background information

Theories of learning serve as conceptual frameworks elucidating the mechanisms behind knowledge acquisition. Behaviorism, one of the prominent theories, posits that external stimuli shape behavior through reinforcement or punishment, as advocated by renowned psychologists B.F. Skinner¹ and Ivan Pavlov². On the other hand, constructivism, championed by Jean Piaget³ and Lev Vygotsky⁴, suggests that learners actively construct their

¹ Skinner, B. F. (1938). *The Behavior of Organisms*. Appleton-Century.

² Pavlov, I. P. (1927). *Conditioned Reflexes*. Oxford University Press.

³ Piaget, J. (1952). *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*. International Universities Press.

⁴ Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.



understanding by engaging with the world. Social learning theory, endorsed by Albert Bandura⁵ and Julian Rotter⁶, underscores the role of social interactions in the learning process.

Cognitive load theory, advanced by John Sweller⁷ and Paul Kirschner⁸, introduces the concept that learners have limited cognitive capacity, emphasizing the presentation of information to optimize learning. Humanistic learning theory, attributed to Abraham Maslow⁹ and Carl Rogers¹⁰, accentuates individual needs, experiences, and intrinsic motivation as driving forces in the learning process.

These theories contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how individuals learn and provide educators with diverse perspectives to enhance the learning experience. Each theory has distinct strengths and limitations, making them more suitable for specific contexts or learning goals.

Educators also employ a spectrum of approaches to enhance learning and deepen students' understanding of foreign languages. Each approach possesses unique strengths and limitations, catering to different learning styles and objectives. The following are some of the most common approaches in language education:

1. *Direct Instruction*: Direct Instruction involves explicit teacher-led instruction through lectures and demonstrations. This approach is particularly effective for teaching fundamental concepts and procedures, allowing immediate feedback. However, its rigidity may be perceived as monotonous by some students.
2. *Inquiry-Based Learning*: Inquiry-Based Learning encourages students to explore and discover answers to questions posed by the teacher. This approach fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills but may be less suitable for complex concepts, requiring additional teacher guidance.
3. *Collaborative Learning*: Collaborative Learning involves students working together in groups to accomplish tasks or solve problems. This approach promotes teamwork, communication, and leadership skills, enhancing social and cognitive development. However, challenges may arise in managing group dynamics and ensuring equal engagement.
4. *Experiential Learning*: Experiential Learning immerses students in direct experiences, such as field trips and role-playing exercises. This approach is effective in teaching real-world skills, making the learning process engaging. However, it can be challenging to implement and may incur additional costs.
5. *Differentiated Instruction*: Differentiated Instruction tailors teaching to meet individual needs, recognizing diverse abilities and learning styles. While highly effective for promoting

⁵ Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. General Learning Press.

⁶ Rotter, J. B. (1954). *Social Learning and Clinical Psychology*. Prentice-Hall.

⁷ Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning. *Cognitive Science*, 12(2), 257-285.

⁸ Kirschner, P. A., Sweller, J., & Clark, R. E. (2006). Why minimal guidance during instruction does not work: An analysis of the failure of constructivist, discovery, problem-based, experiential, and inquiry-based teaching. *Educational Psychologist*, 41(2), 75-86.

⁹ Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and Personality*. Harper.

¹⁰ Rogers, C. R. (1969). *Freedom to Learn: A View of What Education Might Become*. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.



engagement and achievement, implementing this approach in a large classroom setting can be challenging.

In the realm of foreign language education, specific approaches have emerged, each emphasizing distinct principles and methods:

1. *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*: CLT prioritizes communication as the primary goal of language learning. It involves activities like role-plays, pair and group work, and information-gap tasks, promoting real-life language use and contextual understanding (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)¹¹.
2. *Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)*: TBLT emphasizes authentic, real-world tasks as the foundation for language learning. Learners develop language skills by completing tasks such as ordering food or giving directions (Willis & Willis, 2007)¹².
3. *Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT)*: CBLT integrates language instruction with subject matter content, viewing language learning as a means to acquire subject knowledge. For example, learners study global warming in a foreign language to enhance both language skills and content understanding (Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989)¹³.
4. *The Lexical Approach*: The Lexical Approach emphasizes vocabulary's significance, viewing language as a series of "chunks" rather than discrete grammatical rules. It encourages learners to use collocations and phrasal expressions accurately (Lewis, 1993)¹⁴.
5. *The Silent Way*: The Silent Way advocates silence and self-discovery as key learning principles. Teachers act as facilitators, and learners actively participate in their learning process (Gattegno, 1972)¹⁵.

In conclusion, the universal nature of learning theories and teaching approaches transcends geographical boundaries, offering educators worldwide a rich tapestry of insights adaptable to diverse educational systems and cultural landscapes. The flexibility inherent in these methodologies ensures their relevance across linguistic and cultural settings.

In the language classrooms of Uzbekistan, educators adeptly weave these global theories and approaches into the fabric of their teaching practices. The dynamic interplay between theories of learning and language teaching approaches shapes an educational landscape that is both theoretically grounded and practically oriented. As educators tailor their strategies to the unique needs of their students, the subsequent chapters will delve deeper into the specifics of language teaching approaches, exploring their strengths, acknowledging limitations, and offering practical applications within the distinctive context of Uzbekistan. This holistic understanding equips educators to craft inclusive, engaging, and effective learning experiences that resonate with the diverse needs of their students in the Uzbekistan educational.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1 Theories of Learning

¹¹ Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

¹² Willis, J., & Willis, D. (2007). *Doing Task-Based Teaching*. Oxford University Press.

¹³ Snow, M. A., Met, M., & Genesee, F. (1989). A conceptual framework for the integration of language and content in second/foreign language instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23(2), 201-217.

¹⁴ Lewis, M. (1993). *The Lexical Approach: The State of ELT and a Way Forward*. Language Teaching Publications.

¹⁵ Gattegno, C. (1972). *Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools: The Silent Way*. Educational Solutions.



Theories of learning encompass various frameworks and perspectives elucidating the processes through which individuals acquire, process, and retain knowledge and skills. Several noteworthy theories contribute to this understanding:

Behaviorism: This theory underscores the impact of external stimuli on behavior formation, positing that learning transpires through repeated reinforcement or punishment of specific behaviors. Eminent behaviorists such as B.F. Skinner¹⁶ and Ivan Pavlov¹⁷ have significantly contributed to this perspective.

Constructivism: Proposing that learners actively construct their comprehension of the world, constructivism views learning as the creation of mental models or representations through engagement. Key figures in constructivism include Jean Piaget¹⁸ and Lev Vygotsky¹⁹, emphasizing the dynamic nature of knowledge construction.

Social Learning Theory: This theory accentuates the significance of social interaction in the learning process, asserting that individuals acquire knowledge by observing and imitating others. Albert Bandura²⁰ and Julian Rotter²¹ are prominent figures associated with social learning theory, elucidating the role of observational learning.

Cognitive Load Theory: Focusing on the limited capacity of learners to process information, this theory posits that the presentation of information influences the amount that can be effectively learned. Advocates of cognitive load theory, such as John Sweller²² and Paul Kirschner²³, stress the importance of optimizing information presentation for efficient cognitive processing.

Humanistic Learning Theory: This theory underscores individual needs, experiences, and goals as pivotal in the learning process, emphasizing self-directed and self-motivated learning driven by intrinsic motivation. Renowned proponents of humanistic learning theory include Abraham Maslow²⁴ and Carl Rogers²⁵, highlighting the personal and emotional dimensions of learning.

These diverse theories offer insights into the learning processes, aiding educators in facilitating effective learning experiences. Each theory, with its unique strengths and limitations, finds relevance in specific contexts and learning objectives.

2.2. Strengths and Limitations of theories of learning:

Behaviorism has strengths in its focus on observable behaviors, making it easy to measure and analyze. It also provides practical strategies for behavior change, such as

¹⁶ Skinner, B. F. (1938). *The Behavior of Organisms: An Experimental Analysis*. D. Appleton-Century Company.

¹⁷ Pavlov, I. P. (1927). *Conditioned Reflexes*. Oxford University Press.

¹⁸ Piaget, J. (1970). Piaget's Theory. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), *Carmichael's manual of child psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 703-732). Wiley.

¹⁹ Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.

²⁰ Bandura, A., & Walters, R. H. (1963). *Social Learning and Personality Development*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

²¹ Rotter, J. B. (1954). *Social Learning and Clinical Psychology*. Prentice Hall.

²² Sweller, J. (1988). Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning. *Cognitive Science*, 12(2), 257-285.

²³ Kirschner, P. A., Sweller, J., & Clark, R. E. (2006). Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work: An Analysis of the Failure of Constructivist, Discovery, Problem-Based, Experiential, and Inquiry-Based Teaching. *Educational Psychologist*, 41(2), 75-86.

²⁴ Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and Personality*. Harper.

²⁵ Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*. Houghton Mifflin.



positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and punishment. Additionally, it emphasizes the significance of repetition and practice in learning.

However, behaviorism has limitations as it ignores internal mental processes like thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving. It also fails to account for individual differences in learning styles and cognitive abilities. Furthermore, it has been criticized for promoting a narrow view of learning as a stimulus-response process.

On the other hand, cognitive theory has strengths in highlighting the role of mental processes such as attention, memory, and thinking in learning. It also considers individual differences in cognitive abilities and learning styles. Practical strategies like chunking, elaboration, and repetition are offered to enhance learning.

However, cognitive theory is limited in that it primarily focuses on individual cognitive processes and neglects the social context of learning. Some critics argue that it is overly focused on internal mental processes and neglects external factors like motivation and environmental influences. Additionally, it is difficult to directly measure internal cognitive processes.

Constructivism strengths lie in its emphasis on the active role of learners in constructing their understanding. It promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-directed learning. Furthermore, it takes into account the social and cultural context of learning.

However, constructivism has been criticized for being too individualistic and overlooking social and cultural factors. Additionally, it is difficult to measure individual differences in knowledge construction. Some argue that it places too much emphasis on discovery learning and insufficient emphasis on explicit instruction.

Finally, social-cultural theory recognizes the importance of context in learning. Discussions and feedback are key elements. It highlights the impact of social factors on learning. However, there are challenges in implementing it, as it requires significant changes to teaching and learning environments. Additionally, directly measuring the influence of social factors on learning can be difficult. Critics argue that it overlooks individual differences in cognitive abilities and innate biological factors (Ormrod, 2014)²⁶.

The Humanistic Theory focuses on the importance of the whole person, considering emotional and motivational factors. It promotes self-directed learning and personal growth, taking into account individual differences in learning styles and preferences. However, measuring and quantifying humanistic factors like motivation and emotion can be challenging. It is criticized for being too individual-focused and not adequately addressing the social and cultural context. It also lacks clear practical strategies for improving learning (Ormrod, 2014).

The Social Learning Theory emphasizes the significance of social factors, such as modeling and observation, in learning. It takes into consideration both individual cognitive processes and the social context. It offers practical strategies like modeling and scaffolding to enhance learning. However, measuring the influence of social factors on learning can be challenging. Some critics argue that it fails to adequately account for individual differences in

²⁶ Ormrod, J. E. (2014). *Educational Psychology: Developing Learners*. Pearson.



cognitive abilities and learning styles. Additionally, it is said to neglect the role of innate biological factors in learning (Ormrod, 2014).

2.3. Approaches for Teaching Modern Foreign Languages

The term "teaching approaches" describes the various techniques and tactics employed by instructors to promote learning and improve their pupils' comprehension of the material. There are various teaching philosophies, and each has advantages and disadvantages of its own. The following are a few of the most popular methods of instruction:

Direct Instruction: In this method, the instructor gives pupils clear instructions on a certain subject. To impart knowledge to the students, the instructor uses lectures, demonstrations, and other direct means of communication. This method works well for teaching fundamental ideas and processes because it gives teachers the opportunity to provide students feedback right away. But some pupils could find this method overly regimented and uninteresting.

Inquiry-Based Learning: Using this method, the instructor poses queries and issues to the class and then lets them research and figure out the solutions on their own. Students are encouraged to think critically and hone their problem-solving abilities through inquiry-based learning. It might not be appropriate, though, for teaching difficult subjects, and students could need the teacher's assistance.

Collaborative learning: Using this method, students cooperate in groups to finish assignments or find solutions to issues. In addition to fostering leadership, cooperation, and communication abilities, collaborative learning can be very successful in boosting self-assurance and social skills. On the other hand, it could be difficult to guarantee that every student is equally interested and that some students have trouble with group dynamics.

Experiential learning: Through activities like role-playing, simulations, and field trips, students learn by direct experience. Students can find experiential learning to be interesting and fun, and it is especially useful in teaching real-world skills. It can be costly and time-consuming, and its implementation could be difficult.

Differentiated Instruction: This method entails adjusting the curriculum to each student's unique requirements and preferred method of learning. Differentiated instruction calls for teachers to modify their pedagogical approaches in light of students' varying aptitudes, passions, and learning preferences. Although this method can be very successful in raising student achievement and engagement, it can be difficult to apply in a big classroom.

Particularly, over time, a number of approaches to teaching languages have evolved, each with its own distinct tenets and techniques:

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): This method places a strong emphasis on the development of learners' ability to speak successfully in everyday contexts, viewing communication as the main objective of language acquisition. It includes a range of exercises like information-gap assignments, role-plays, and pair and group work that demand that students use language in context (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)²⁷.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT): This method of teaching languages places a strong emphasis on using real-world, realistic tasks as the foundation for language

²⁷ Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.



acquisition. This method places a strong emphasis on helping students acquire the language skills necessary to carry out everyday tasks like placing an order at a restaurant or providing directions (Willis & Willis, 2007)²⁸.

Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT): This method of teaching languages combines the instruction of language with the instruction of subject matter. Language acquisition is not seen as a goal unto itself in CBLT, but rather as a tool for acquiring subject matter content. For example, learners might study a topic such as global warming in a foreign language in order to improve their language skills while also learning about the topic (Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989)²⁹.

The Lexical Approach: This method stresses the value of vocabulary in language acquisition and sees language as a collection of "chunks" as opposed to a fixed set of grammatical rules. It promotes students to gain the ability to employ collocations and phrasal phrases correctly and appropriately and focuses on teaching vocabulary in context (Lewis, 1993)³⁰.

The Silent Way: This method of teaching languages stresses the importance of self-discovery and silence as fundamental learning concepts. The instructor is considered as a facilitator, rather than an authority figure, and learners are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning process (Gattegno, 1972)³¹.

2.4. Strength and Limitations of Teaching Approaches

The Grammar-Translation Approach highlights accuracy and precision in language learning (Brown, 2001), enabling students to grasp the structure and rules of the target language (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). It is particularly beneficial for teaching reading and writing skills (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). However, it focuses primarily on the written language and may not foster communicative competence, potentially hindering students' ability to speak or understand the target language (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

Conversely, the Direct Method emphasizes spoken language and communication skills (Brown, 2001)³², aiding students in developing listening and speaking abilities (Richards and Rodgers, 2014)³³. It also promotes the use of the target language in the classroom (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Nonetheless, its implementation may be challenging without a native speaker, and it may not be suitable for teaching grammar and writing skills (Brown, 2001), especially for students unaccustomed to an immersive language environment (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

The Audio-Lingual Approach focuses on enhancing listening and speaking skills (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), incorporating repetition and drill activities to facilitate language acquisition (Brown, 2001). This approach is particularly useful for individuals who need to quickly learn a language, such as military personnel or business people (Brown, 2001). However, it can become monotonous and repetitive for students, limiting

²⁸ Willis, J., & Willis, D. (2007). *Doing Task-Based Teaching*. Oxford University Press.

²⁹ Snow, M. A., Met, M., & Genesee, F. (1989). A Conceptual Framework for the Integration of Language and Content in Second/Foreign Language Instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23(2), 201–217.

³⁰ Lewis, M. (1993). *The Lexical Approach: The State of ELT and a Way Forward*. Language Teaching Publications.

³¹ Gattegno, C. (1972). *Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools: The Silent Way*. Educational Solutions Worldwide Inc.

³² Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Pearson Education.

³³ Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.



opportunities for creative language use (Richards and Rodgers, 2014) and potentially leading to restricted language proficiency due to an overreliance on drills and pattern practices (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

In contrast, Communicative Language Teaching underscores communicative competence and real-life language use (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), encouraging students to employ the target language meaningfully (Brown, 2001) and providing opportunities for language practice in authentic situations (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Nevertheless, designing appropriate communicative activities can be challenging for teachers (Brown, 2001), and it may not be suitable for teaching grammar and writing skills (Richards and Rodgers, 2014), given its time-consuming nature and the extensive preparation it demands (Richards and Rodgers, 2014).

To sum up, theories of learning are not mutually exclusive; they often overlap, each with its own strengths and limitations, offering diverse insights into learning. Educators should consider these theories when developing instructional strategies. In Uzbekistan, teachers apply various learning theories in language classrooms, such as behaviorism for language acquisition through rewards and punishments or constructivism through problem-solving activities. Additionally, teachers may employ different approaches for teaching modern foreign languages, adapting strategies based on their experience, knowledge, and understanding of students' learning needs in Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this comprehensive exploration of learning theories and teaching approaches underscores their vital role in shaping effective educational practices. The study delves into foundational theories such as behaviorism, constructivism, social learning, cognitive load, and humanistic learning, offering insights into the diverse perspectives that elucidate knowledge acquisition. The discussion extends to language teaching approaches, encompassing Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, and the Lexical Approach, among others.

Recognizing the global significance of these theories and approaches, the study emphasizes their universal applicability across diverse cultural and linguistic settings. The flexibility inherent in these methodologies ensures their relevance in various educational systems worldwide. Importantly, the study underscores the dynamic interplay between theories, approaches, and the unique context of each learning environment.

The narrative extends to the language classrooms of Uzbekistan, where educators adeptly integrate these global theories and approaches into their teaching practices. The nuanced interplay between theories of learning and language teaching approaches shapes an educational landscape that is both theoretically grounded and practically oriented. As educators tailor their strategies to the unique needs of their students in Uzbekistan, the subsequent chapters promise a deeper exploration of language teaching approaches, highlighting their strengths, acknowledging limitations, and offering practical applications within the distinctive Uzbekistan context.

In essence, this study equips educators with a holistic understanding, empowering them to craft inclusive, engaging, and effective learning experiences that resonate with the diverse needs of their students within the Uzbekistan educational framework. The findings reinforce



the importance of considering the multifaceted nature of learning, the adaptability of teaching methodologies, and the continual evolution of educational strategies to meet the dynamic demands of modern education.

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