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## **The Salient Method in Language Teaching**

### **1. Definition**

The **Salient Method** focuses on **drawing learners' attention to the most important, noticeable, or meaningful features of language** during learning. The word *salient* means “something that stands out.” So, in teaching, this method helps learners **notice** the key points of grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, or meaning in a communicative context.

This is based on the idea that **noticing is essential for learning** — learners can only acquire what they consciously notice in the input.

### **2. Theoretical Background**

The method is closely connected to:

- **Noticing Hypothesis** (Richard Schmidt, 1990): Language learning happens when learners notice forms or features in the input.
- **Task-Based Learning and Communicative Approaches**, where meaning is central but attention is occasionally shifted to form.

So, the **Salient Method bridges the gap** between:

- purely communicative methods (which focus on meaning), and
- grammar-based methods (which focus on form).

### 3. Key Principles

1. **Focus on Salience:** Teachers highlight the most important language features — those that are meaningful, frequent, or confusing.
2. **Conscious Noticing:** Students are guided to notice patterns, forms, or pronunciation in real input.
3. **Contextual Learning:** The salient items are always presented in context — not isolated drills.
4. **Interaction and Reflection:** Learners talk about what they noticed, compare, and use those forms in new contexts.
5. **Teacher as Facilitator:** The teacher does not lecture but helps learners discover salient language features themselves.

### 4. Example in Practice

Let's say you are teaching **past tense forms** using a story. Instead of explaining all the grammar rules first, you:

- Read the story aloud or play an audio.
- Ask students: “What words do you hear that show something happened in the past?”
- Highlight (make salient) words like *went, saw, played, did*.
- Discuss patterns (“They all end with -ed or change form”).
- Then, learners use these in a short task (writing their own mini-story).

So the focus is on **noticing and using salient features** rather than memorizing grammar.

### 5. Advantages

- ✓ Encourages **active noticing** and **learner autonomy**.
- ✓ Promotes **deeper understanding** of grammar and vocabulary.
- ✓ Connects **form and meaning** naturally.
- ✓ Can be combined with **any modern method** (TBLT, CLT, etc.).

### 6. Challenges

- △□ Requires skilled teachers who can identify salient features effectively.
- △□ Learners might miss subtle patterns if not guided well.
- △□ Not suitable for very low-level beginners who need explicit structure first.

## 7. Conclusion

The **Salient Method** is a **cognitive, learner-centered approach** emphasizing *noticing, awareness, and meaning*. It helps students internalize language naturally by drawing attention to what really matters — the **salient features** that drive communication and understanding.