



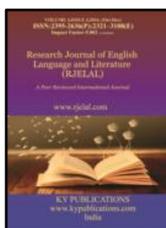
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AN EVALUATION OF THE PRINCIPLES AND SELECTED METHODS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

English is undoubtedly the most widely used language and the most important and main source of international communication in the present day world. English is the lingua franca in present age. Being the global language, as it is called, it is used and learnt all over the world in one way or the other way either as a mother tongue or as a foreign or second language. Thus having the status of being a world-language, English is taught in almost every school all around the world keeping in mind some important principles and methodologies for the successful teaching – learning process. The paper discusses the importance of English language, some of the principles, history and critical evaluation of some of the important methodologies of English language teaching in the classrooms for a better understanding and successful teaching –learning process.

Keywords: ELT, Methods, Approaches, Linguistics, Techniques, Global Language.

Introduction

David Crystal in his book; 'English as a Global language' (1997) says: "A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country." English has been given the status of an official language by U.N.O. At present, English is used by more than 1.5 billion people around the world, be it speaking or writing. English is used as a mother tongue by three hundred and fifty million people and the rest of the people use it as a second or foreign language. To quote Prof. Randolph Quirk, "Paul Vargheese says that most people who speak English are not English and were not born in England."

The importance of English language can be best understood in the words of David Crystal who says, "it is the language on which the sun never sets." The British empire must have disappeared but

the empire of English language ever growing vast in every nook and corner of the world, thus becoming a neo-colonial empire whose importance is inevitable and necessary for one and all. In over 60 countries, it is used as official or semi-official language. On an average estimate, there are about three million users of this language all over the world, in which one thousand million people are it's speakers, which is about 16% of the world population. There are over 5000 newspapers which are published in English. In other words, English is the language of books, international business establishments, science and technology, sports, conferences, media and advertisements, etc. More than 3,000,000 scientific and technological articles, and 60,000 books in English are published annually.

Black South African writer Harry Mashabela, writing in 1975, this, "Learning and using

English will not only give us the much-needed unifying chord but will also land us into the exciting world of ideas; it will enable us to keep company with king in the world of ideas and also make it possible for us to share the experience of our own brothers in the world

Thus the importance of English has resulted in a huge demand for qualified EFL/ESL teachers. Many British speakers of English are becoming EFL teachers in Asia and Africa with as little as 1 to 10 weeks training. Some are allegedly doing so without even this. L. A. C. Strong once proclaimed, "for us who speak English, English is everythingEnglish is not a subject, English is our life." But in countries where English is taught as a second or third language, this statement does not hold true. English teaching and learning is inspired by utilitarian aim only which can be achieved by acquiring practical command of English. A pointed out by P. Gurrey, "The careful thinking out of a detailed and well defined objectives for the lessons will do more than almost anything else to improve a teacher's work and to make it effective." Objectives should be stated clearly with good planning and right teaching methods and techniques should be adopted keeping in view certain principles and objectives (Language Development and Literary Development) of teaching English.

Principles of Teaching English

Sometimes for teaching a language successfully, a professional training is not needed for a good teacher but the number of such teachers is not in abundance. There are other trained and experienced teachers also who have been highly successful in language teaching. There have been very useful insights into languages provided by many linguists that have directly influenced the English Language Teaching in 1940s and 1950s. Direct Method and Audio-lingual Method which are the Structural approaches to language teaching show how much the linguistic studies of early 20th century inspired the language teaching. The idea of Linguistics were drawn from anthropology, sociology and psychology that resulted in the birth of two other important disciplines- sociology and psycholinguistics which are at the key of Applied Linguistics or English Language Teaching, along with

Linguistics. Pedagogy which is perhaps the more important area did not receive much attention until recently from the experts.

Despite being a trained or not, every teacher holds a presupposed belief about his students, their levels and learning capabilities and the methods he is going to use or utilize in effective and successful teaching in the classroom. Despite being aware of the old and new methods, his teaching is always based on some principles that would guide his teaching throughout. Some of these principles are *psychological*, some are *linguistic* while some are concerned with *language pedagogy*. Let us take a look at these principles:

Some of the Linguistic Principles are as follows:

1. The priority should be given to the English sounds and should appear in proper expressions and sounds spoken with intonation and rhythm as used by a native speaker.
2. *Imitation*: It is one of the important principles of language learning. Good speech is the result of imitating good models and these models should be intelligible which later on should be followed by intense practice.
3. *Language Skills*: Priority should be given to all the four language skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and speaking are the primary skills while as reading and writing are the secondary skills. Language is learnt when all these four skills are taught in a correct order which means listening comes first which is followed by speaking and then reading and finally writing.
4. *Restricted use of Mother Tongue*: The students should be barred from using their mother tongue during teaching English in the classrooms. At the beginner's level they should be allowed to use their mother tongue for some explanations but should be restricted in the following stages.

Principle of Selection and Gradation

A Language teacher is required to decide what to teach and how much to teach in a syllabus at a particular point of time which is called as

Selection; in what order to teach and what should be taught at a particular time which is called as *Gradation*; how to teach which involves the methodology and is called as *Presentation* and how many times to teach which is called as *Repetition*.

Selection of linguistic items involves:

- a. *Frequency* which means how often a certain item or a word is to be used.
- b. *Range* which means how a word or a certain item can be used in different contexts.
- c. *Coverage* which means how many different meanings can be conveyed by an item or a word.
- d. *Availability* which means how far an item is convenient to be taught.
- e. *Learnability* which means to what extent an item or a word is easy to be learnt.
- f. *Teachability* which means to what extent an item or a word is easy to be taught in terms of social context.

Gradation of linguistic items involves the order of linguistic items to be taught. Gradation involves *Grouping* and *Sequence*.

Grouping is concerned with the systems and structures of language. In other words, Grouping is concerned with what sounds, words, phrases and meanings are to be taught. Grouping involves the following kinds:

- i. *Phonetic grouping*: It means grouping according to the sounds. For instance, words having same sounds are placed in one group such as cat, bat, rat, mat, hat, but, hut, shut, etc.
- ii. *Lexical grouping*: It means grouping according to the lexical situations. For instance school, teacher, principal, library, classroom, etc. All these words are grouped around "school."
- iii. *Grammatical grouping*: It means grouping according to the similar patterns. For example his pen, my pen (pattern grouping); on the roof, on the floor, on the wall (phrase grouping).
- iv. *Semantic grouping*: It means grouping according to the meaning. For instance

school, college, university, bicycle, car, train, aeroplane, etc.

- v. *Structural grouping*: It involves grouping according to the structures which means how the selected items fit into one another like sounds into words, words into phrases, phrases into sentences, and sentences into the situations.

Sequence means the order and structure of the linguistic items or in other words what comes after what. Sequence must be in the arrangement of sounds (phonetic sequence), phrases (grammatical sequence), words (lexical sequence) and in meaning (semantic sequence). It involves or suggests the direction, expansion, variation and length of the structures.

Psychological principles of language teaching have been derived from the science of psychology. They are as follows:

Motivation: It is one of the most important factors for teaching and learning a second language. The interest among the students can be aroused in a number of ways like the use of charts, models, pictures, flash cards, language games or other audio-visual devices. Palmer suggests the following six factors which lead to motivate and create interest among children:

- i. The limitation of bewilderment, that is, minimum of confusion;
- ii. The sense of progress achieved;
- iii. Competitions;
- iv. Game-like exercises;
- v. The right relation between teacher and student; and
- vi. Variety.

Immediate Correction: Corrections should be made immediately as they help in improving students' responses. But they should be made in such a way as to bring about learning and encouragement among the students and not frustration or discouragement.

Reinforcement: It is the most important principle in language learning as it helps in better learning. The students should be given a positive feedback immediately after they answer a question correctly.

Correct Responses: This principle requires a language teacher to use the teaching techniques as such as to encourage the maximum percentage of correct responses which in turn will give students a feeling of success and achievement.

Frequent Review: This psychological principle is necessary for retention and during the process of reviewing, variations in material should be essentially introduced and practiced.

Practice in Everyday Situations: A language is best and quickly learnt when it is practiced in everyday life and situations. The students should be encouraged to use English in their everyday situations.

Theoretical and Pedagogical principles means the methods, techniques or practices of teaching and language teaching is based on certain theories of language provided by Applied Linguistics and the most traditional technique of English language teaching is the Grammar-Translation Method in which the learners consciously learn the rules of English language, memorize its rules and use them in translating the texts from their mother tongue into English and vice versa and thus the emphasis is given to two skills only i.e. reading and writing and the other two skills- speaking and listening were altogether neglected and ignored because if which the students would be unable to communicate in the target language.

Because of its shortcomings, Grammatical-Translation Method was later on replaced by structural theory through the Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method and Situational Language Teaching. In this theory, language is described in terms of number of structural patterns and vocabulary items which the teacher is required to teach in a suitable sequence to code the meaning done through various objects available in the classroom- blackboard, desk, door, windows, etc. But these structural approaches were one dimensional as they concentrated on one form only as they presented language orally and the focus was on speech only. Reading and writing were followed by oral work. As such the structural approaches were one- dimensional as the use of language in social setting was completely ignored and thus it resulted in the development of Communicative Language Teaching according to

which the classrooms were no longer teacher-centered but they were student-centered. It advocated that learning was more important than teaching. Learners were no longer the passive listeners but they were the active participants in the whole process.

The principles, thus discussed above, have influenced the English Language teachers and courses as well. Teachers whether trained or untrained, knowingly or unknowingly utilize different linguistic, psychological and pedagogical principles for successful teaching of English. But it should be made clear that the trained teachers are always different from the untrained ones as the former is never a slave of any particular ideology but they continuously bring about changes in their teachings and methodologies to achieve his goal. Moreover, they bring with them knowledge and experiences which help them to reshape their teaching strategies.

Method, Approach and Design

Method refers to the techniques used by a language teacher in his teaching programme. It is concerned with the classroom activities, tasks, role of a teacher and a learner. There are three components of a method:

- * Approach
- * Design
- * Procedure

Approach deals with the theory of language learning and the nature of language. For example, there are two theories of language learning in language teaching practices being put forth. They are:

1. The *behaviourist* view of learning which views language learning as habit formation, both verbal and non-verbal. This theory states that language can be best learnt through imitation and repetition. This theory is commonly known to as Stimulus-Response Theory or S-R Theory.
2. The *cognitive* view of learning states that humans have an inborn or innate ability to discover the fundamental patterns or outlines of a language they hear and thus they form their own propositions and construct new sentences. Language

learning does not take place through imitation or repetition solely.

Design deals with:

- objectives of a course both general and specific;
- a syllabus model;
- responsibility of teachers and learners;
- teaching tasks and types of learning;
- role of teaching materials classroom.

Procedure deals with the activities or actions taking place in the actual classroom. Thus it is concerned with the classroom techniques, behaviours and practices.

To draw a better understanding between the three, Edward Anthony (1963 :63-67), made a parallel distinction between **approach, method and technique**. He quoted:

The arrangement is hierarchical . The organization key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach...

- ...An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught...
- ...Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, A method is procedural.
- ...A technique is implementation -that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques may be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well

A review of some methods in English Language Teaching

English is the most widely studied second/foreign language. But about five hundred years back, it was Latin that dominated commerce, education, government and religion in the western world. French, English and Italian became the most important languages in sixteenth century due to the political changes in Europe and thus the significance

of Latin language was lost in spoken and written forms communication. Therefore, the significance and position of Latin was reduced to an "occasional" subject in the school curriculum from being a "living language." It was now used to analyze its grammar which became a model for studying foreign languages in nineteenth century. Children were given rigorous training in grammar rules, translations, conjugations, etc.in 'grammar schools' in England. It was believed that Latin develops intellectual abilities and thus the study of its grammar became a 'mental gymnastics'. Till nineteenth century, the grammar of Latin became a model for course of teaching any foreign language in which all grammatical rules were enlisted and clarified by translation of some selected tests or sentences into mother tongue of the learner. Thus without any real communication leaning, the foreign language-teaching courses focused only on the grammatical rules derived from Latin and applied to the language in question.

This technique to language teaching was later known as Grammar-Translation Method.

Grammar-Translation Method

History

Perhaps nobody knows when Grammar-translation method was introduced or formulated because of the lack of the availability of historical evidence. However, it was in the late eighteenth century that this method of translating the texts into the mother tongue for teaching a foreign language became popular.

German scholars like Seindenucker, Ploetz, Meidenger and Ollendorf were the main advocates of Grammar-Translation Method. They used to combine grammatical rules, vocabulary, texts and sentences to be translated in their 'lessons,' or 'language courses' from 1783 to 1849. That is why it is believed that that was the offspring of German scholarship, which has been pointed out to aim at *knowing everything about something without knowing the thing itself* by some critics. This method is also known as the Prussian Method in U.S.A.

Objectives

The main objectives of this method have been best summarized by Richards and Rogers (2001: 5-6) as follows:

1. The goal of foreign language study is to learn a language in order to read its literature or in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from foreign language study. Grammar-Translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. It hence views language learning as consisting of little more than memorizing rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the foreign language...
2. Reading and writing are the major focus; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking and listening.
3. Vocabulary selection is based solely on the reading texts used, and words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorization. In a typical Grammar-Translation text, the grammar rules are presented and illustrated, a list of vocabulary items is presented with their translation equivalents, and translation exercises are prescribed.
4. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. Much of the lesson is devoted to translating sentences into and out of the target language, and it is this focus on the sentence that is a distinctive feature of the method...
5. Accuracy is emphasized. Students are expected to attain high standards in translation...
6. Grammar is taught deductively-that is, by presentation and study of grammar rules, which are then practiced through translation exercises...
7. The student's native language is the medium of instruction. It is used to explain new items and to enable comparisons to be made between the foreign language and the student's native language.

The passage to be read in a Grammar-Translation lecture is followed by the following exercises generally:

1. Synonyms/antonyms
2. Fill- in- the blank exercises using prepositions, adjectives, verbs, etc.
3. Grammar exercises with examples.
4. Comprehension questions based on the given passage
5. Usage of words in sentences.
6. Summarizing of a given text.
7. Composition.

Theoretical Assumptions

Language learning is an intellectual exercise involving the learning and memorizing the grammatical rules and then relating them to the first language through rigorous and continuous practice. Second language can be acquired only through the first language.

Critical evaluation

With the increased demand in the oral proficiency in a foreign language in mid- nineteenth century among Europeans, Grammar-Translation method was rejected as an unproductive method of teaching a foreign language. The method being book oriented and an over exaggeration on the grammatical rules and vocabulary memorization and translation of literary texts, the validity of this method was questioned. Only two skills-reading and writing were being focused upon neglecting the other two- speaking and listening. Because of the over emphasis on the translation of texts into mother tongue, it left no scope on the communicative competence and it dominated the students' or learners from which they never got free.

Despite a huge criticism, this method is still in use. Stern in his book, *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching (1983)* points out that "the first language as a reference system is indeed important for the second language learner. Therefore translation in one form or the other cross lingual techniques can play a certain part in language learning. Moreover, some learners endeavor to understand the grammatical system of the second language. Hence grammar teaching too, may have some importance for them. Furthermore, thinking about formal features of the second language and translation as a technique, put the learner into an active problem-solving situation. "As an easy way of

clarifying the grammatical points, when it becomes difficult to explain certain points and difficult to achieve the desired results, the teachers still resort to translation techniques.

Practical application

To understand the Grammar-Translation Method in practical terms in a classroom, following steps are to be taken by the teacher:

Step 1: A reading passage is chosen by the teacher from the textbook of English and each student is asked to read few lines from the passage and translate them into their mother tongue (L1). The student is helped by the teacher in new vocabulary.

Step 2: When students are finished with reading and translating the passage, they are asked by the teacher in mother tongue (L1) if they have any questions and which in turn are answered by the teacher in mother tongue only. This process continues till the teacher feels that all the students have got answers of all of their asked questions.

Step 3: After the above activity, the students are asked to answer the given questions at the end of the passage.

Step 4: After one and a half hour are finished, the teacher, in mother tongue asks the students to check their answers by reading them aloud in the class which the students do one by one. The teacher nods at a correct answer and provides correct answer if the answer written by the student is incorrect.

Step 5: In the next activity as announced by the teacher, the students are asked to translate the listed words into their L1 and L1 equivalents are given by the teacher in case the students don't know. The same method is used for synonyms, antonyms, cognates, etc.

Step 6: Grammar exercises are now done by giving the rules for each exercise by the teacher and simultaneously, they students are asked to translate the sentences into their L1.

Step 7: The students are now asked to translate and memorize (vocabulary items) the whole passage into L1. They are also required to write sentences for each vocabulary item.

Step 8: In the final step or activity, the students are required to write a composition based on the passage.

The Direct Method

History

Due to industrialization and international trade and travel, an upsurge of increasing opportunities in communication was felt in Europe in the mid and late- nineteenth century. A demand for oral proficiency in foreign languages was experienced. Grammar-Translation Method was already found to be inadequate and ineffective in the development of 'communicative skills or ability' in learners by language teachers who came to be known as 'reformists.' A new method was advocated by them which strongly avoided the usage of L1 and which presented language in contexts. They claimed that the best way to teach a foreign language is through the target language itself using gestures, actions and demonstrations. The main proponents of this method were Pendergast (1860-1866) and Sauveur (1826-1907). They recommended the *Natural Method* which I known by many names like Psychological Method/ Reform Method/Phonetical Method/Anti-grammatical Method/Phonic Method and this method later came to be known as the Direct Method.

As already discussed above that that the evolution of the Direct Method was the result of industrialization and a demand to teach foreign languages to facilitate travel, trade and commerce between the European countries. Furthermore, with the introduction of phonetics in language pedagogy, an emphasis on spoken English usage and developments in linguistic scholarship, a lot of developments could be seen in the Direct Method. This method was adopted officially by France and Germany and it came to be widely known through its use by Maxmillan Berlitz and Sauveur. This method was also known as the *Berlitz Method*.

Objectives

A radical change is represented by the Direct Method from literary language to the day-to-day spoken language as the object of language teaching and learning. Its salient features are as follows:

- Grammar is taught inductively with the use of everyday vocabulary and structures.

- Second language learning should be an imitation of first language learning, as it is the natural way humans learn any language.
- Oral skills are developed.
- Concrete meanings are taught through pictures, demonstrations, etc and abstract meanings are taught through association of ideas.
- Translation is avoided at all costs and good pronunciation is aimed at.
- Both oral and listening skills are taught .
- Printed words are kept away as long as possible from the second language learner.
- The writing is kept away from the learner until after the printed word has been introduced.

Usually a short text is presented or used by the teacher in the classroom and the difficult phrases/words are explained in the target language with the help of paraphrase, demonstration, context, etc. Grammar rules are derived by the students on their own. Transportation, substitution, dictation, free composition, etc are involved in the exercises. Good pronunciation is stressed since this method involves a lot of spoken language.

Theoretical assumptions

The best way to learn a language is only through demonstration. Students must be encouraged to use language naturally so that rules of grammar are induced by them instead of using analytical procedures of explaining grammatical rules. The method emphasizes the importance of sounds and simple sentences and direct association of language with objects and persons of immediate environment-the classroom, home, garden, etc.

Critical evaluation

The Direct Method became popular in private schools, especially run by Berlitz. However, the implementation of this method in public schools became very difficult as it demanded a very high proficiency in spoken language, from the teacher- a native-like fluency in non-native teachers and, presence of a native-speaking teacher wherever possible and since finding proficient teachers was difficult, adherence to this method proved counterproductive. Furthermore, the teachers had to struggle hard to explain particular word in target language when the same word could be explained or

simply translated in mother tongue of the learner, to make the easier.

The major drawback of the Direct Method was its belief that second language must be learned the way first language is acquired which is not possible. First language is acquired as the child by experiencing the world around as the child grows and formulating pre-verbal concepts.

This method lost its significance by the late 1929s and thus modifications were suggested, especially in the United States that were later published as the Coleman Report. According to the report, no method could guarantee a successful acquisition of a foreign language. Furthermore, the goal of teaching conversational skills was found difficult in view of the limited time available for teaching a foreign language.

Henry Sweet, a very popular applied linguist in Britain identified the difficulties in the methodology of the Direct Method for a teacher. Therefore, he along with other linguists felt the need to have introduce a new teaching programme with sound methodological basis in light of the proposals earlier put forward by the Reform Movement. As a result Oral approach or Situational Language Teaching and the American Audio-lingual Method emerged both of which were based on the structuralist view of language.

Practical application

A typical Direct Method lesson is completed in the following stages:

Step 1: A big map of Saudi Arabia for example is placed in front of the students by the teacher and the students are asked to open their books at the page where the lesson is entitled 'Saudi Civilization'. A sentence is read from the passage by each student and the part of the map the sentence describes is pointed at by the teacher.

Step 2: The students are asked if there had been any difficult words/ expressions, by the teacher. If yes, the meaning of those words/expressions is explained by the teacher by drawing them on the board or by pointing to some immediate context. For instance, if someone has not understood the meaning of the word 'between', the teacher points to a student sitting in between two other students

and says, 'Mohamad is sitting between Ahmed and Emad'.

Step 3: The questions are asked by the teacher to the students to check to check whether they have understood and learnt the passage. Students are also encouraged to ask questions one at a time.

Step 4: The exercises on grammar, filling in the blanks etc. are done by the students. The sentences are read aloud by them and the missing words are supplied.

Step 5: The students are asked to take out their notebooks for dictation by the teacher.

Step 6: Pronunciation of words, paying attention to sounds and syllables is practiced by the class in this last step.

Structural-Situational Method/Approach

History

The origin of Structural-Situational Method also known as Situational Language Teaching or the Oral Approach) could be traced back to the developments in 1920s and 1930s that took place in the two continents- Europe and the United States of America. A more scientific approach to teaching of English than was found in the Direct Method was developed in Europe by two significant British applied linguists-Harold Palmer and A.S Hornby-both of whom were familiar with the works of Otto Jespersen, a Swiss linguist and Daniel Jones, a famous phonetician. They wanted to present language systematically in the classroom. Vocabulary control was the main focus of this approach which AS Palmer, a famous language teaching specialist believed to be the core of any foreign language teaching programme. The method was inspired from two important studies:

- a. An independent investigation from Michael West, a teacher, who in 1920, had surveyed the role of English in India, as an Inspector of Schools in Bengal.
- b. The recommendations of the Coleman Report in the USA.

Both these reports stressed on vocabulary control as one of the principles of teaching English as a foreign language. Thus, Michael West's book '*A General Service List of English Words*' (1953) became influential in

choosing the vocabulary content of a language course and the establishment of the basis of the syllabus design in language teaching. It was found out that knowledge of two thousand words could ease reading in a foreign language and that is why this method is also sometimes referred to as the Reading Method.

The modified form of the Direct Method or a reading based approach was used by the American linguists at the same period of time when the British applied linguists were trying to develop a procedure of presenting language items in a systematic way in the classroom. But none of them were familiar with each other's progress. With the entry of the United States in World War II, the whole scenario got changed, also with the launch of a massive programme of training its army personnel in enemy languages in as soon as possible. Thus, to develop the foreign language teaching programmes for developing fluency in a variety of foreign languages, the American universities were assigned for the same. As a result, the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was established in 1942 involving fifty five American universities.

The main aim of the ASTP was to develop the conversational proficiency in foreign languages. Text books did not exist at that time. So, the researchers had to work with a native speaker who was also called as an 'informant' and who served as the only source of vocabulary and phrases in his/her mother tongue. It was not necessary that the linguist should have the knowledge of the target language, but he/she was able to elicit the basic structures of the language under investigation. Thus the foundation for structural linguistics was laid, and under the directorship of Charles Fries, the first English Language Institute in the university of Michigan was formed in 1939. The Direct Method was out rightly rejected by Charles Fries and his team, giving the importance to the 'fundamental skills' i.e. listening and speaking. The main techniques used in classroom were:

- Dialogues and memorization
- Expansion drills, Repetition drills, Substitution drills, Transformation & Question-answer drills
- Minimal-pair technique

- Grammar games

Objectives

The main of this approach is to develop oral proficiency in the language through carefully selected vocabulary to be used in everyday communication. Thus, language teaching begins with spoken English. Materials are presented orally and practiced in real situations. Grammatical items are taught from simple to complex. Mother tongue is avoided at all costs and English is the language of classroom.

Theoretical assumptions

The methodology in this approach involves three basic principles:

1. Selection: choosing lexical and grammatical items.
2. Gradation: organizing and sequencing content
3. Presentation: techniques for presenting and practicing items in the course.

Direct Method was rejected and called as 'obsolete' by Palmer, Hornby and many other applied linguists. This approach is based on behaviourist habit-formation theory. Grammar is taught inductively like Direct Method. The meaning of the word is taught in a way as is used in a situation.

Critical evaluation

As stress is laid on spoken language in this approach, it can also be called as an oral approach. Classroom teaching is done through demonstration of a particular object or classroom situations. The learner is supposed to memorise a set of selected vocabulary structures to be used in day-today communication. This approach is completed in three phases;

- a. Presentation b. Practice and c. Production.

The meanings were taught through structural drills using concrete objects and pictures accompanied by actions and gestures. Teachers found it easy to demonstrate concrete objects but difficult to make abstraction understood by the learner because of which the use of mother tongue was found very easy to teach the meaning to the learner. This approach was found suitable for elementary levels but difficult at advanced stages and it was found inadequate and ineffective for teaching prose, poetry, and composition. Noam Chomsky

questioned this approach as it was based on behaviourism which resulted in the development of alternative approaches-Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Communicative Method

History

Various principles of language and language learning form the basis of this method for classroom procedures and techniques. The origins of CLT traces back to the teachers who were dissatisfied with the previous approaches as their focus was on product rather than the processes involved in learning a foreign a language. In Britain scholars like Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson taking cue from the work of John Firth, MAK Halliday, Dell Hymes, John Gumpres and William Labov and the philosophical works of Jane Austen and John Searle, advocated a functional approach to language learning that gradually gained currency and came to be known as CLT. The fast changing educational scenario in Europe also contributed to the development of CLT.

Objective

CLT aims at the communicative competence among the learners to effectively communicate in the target language. Unlike structural-situational approach, CLT focuses on meanings and functions. Learner and learning are more important and language is acquired rather than learnt consciously. The teacher teaches in the classroom through problem-solving activities. There is no textbook taught as the main goal is to develop language automatically and all the four language skills are focused equally.

Theoretical assumptions

As language is used both for both communication and as communication, therefore, the goal of language teaching is to develop 'communicative competence' which was coined by an American Anthropologist, Dell Hymes, according to whom a native speaker has the ability to use the knowledge of language that he already possesses, for communicating in the society he lives in.

Dell Hymes' theory of communicative competence was complimented by MAK Halliday, a British applied linguist by identifying seven basic functions

of language performed for children learning their mother tongue:

1. Instrumental function.
2. Regulatory function.
3. Interactional function.
4. Personal function.
5. Heuristic function.
6. Imaginative function.
7. Representational function.

Thus it becomes much clearer that language is not just grammar and structures. The learner in CLT is an active participant than being a passive learner in the classroom. Language acquisition becomes more effective and easy, when the tasks designed involve the spontaneous use of language by the learner.

Critical evaluation

CLT is an eclectic approach to foreign language. The normal classroom in CLT involves language games, role plays, group/pair work, question-answer sessions, etc, all related to a learner's personal experiences. Learning does not take place through text books only but through newspapers, graphics, wall chart, etc. The most significant thing about this method is that the main or whole focus is on the learner. Thus all the activities in the classroom centre round the learner as he is the negotiator, object of learning as well as the learning process. The lessons are all based on tasks and problem solving solutions which are done through discussions and negotiations with the learner being an active participant.

CLT comes with certain shortcomings as well. The term 'communicative' does not have any single uniform method. Different teachers use a wide variety of techniques in the classroom with the learners which include jigsaw puzzles, slide shows, incomplete maps, etc.

Another problem faced by the students is no formal use of textbooks while dealing with English and thus there is no formal teaching in classroom which results in confusion. A teacher is expected to monitor and control the class but the teacher here does not work as an authority in all aspects of learning.

Practical application

As already mentioned that CLT involves a varied number of tasks or activities all of which can't be described here. Some of the tasks include:

1. Warm-ups: In order to develop the interest in students, a small task is given to them in the beginning of the class which does not take more than 5 minutes.
2. Games: Enjoyable activities like language teaching games for teaching and learning are done in the classroom.

Tasks: All four skills are covered by performing a variety of different tasks as per the age groups. All these activities take 20-30 minutes

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