Learning English as a Second Language through basic Approaches and Methods

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Abstract—This paper is aimed to find out how school and college teachers use the Approaches and Methods in their teachings. This qualitative study analyses how teachers have to be aware in picking Approaches and Methods before they deliver certain materials and treat their students. They teach in schools considering English as a Foreign Language. This study found that the teachers only used several Approaches and Methods like Grammar-translation Method which discuss language rules of first language and target language, Audio-lingual Method where drilling is used, and so on. Later, this study is expected to help teachers in preparing their teaching in the classroom, and which teaching Methods and Approaches they should use in teaching the students.

Keywords—Methods, Approaches, Teaching, Learners.

I. INTRODUCTION

Richards (2013) concluded that teaching should be done in certain ways, so that a teacher can achieve learning objectives. One of them is by delivering instruction in certain manners. The manners are called methods and approaches. There are several kinds of methods and approaches used in teaching. Teachers should be aware of manners in how they treat their students. Whether she/he teaches young children or adolescents, she/he needs to find appropriate kinds of teaching methods. Once she/he gets the right way to teach the students, she/he would be able to establish a good atmosphere in the classroom, a good communication with the learners and a smooth learning process. A right method or approach also generates effective classroom activity.

This study aims to describe what teaching methods and approaches are applied by the teachers. This study gives a clearer explanation to teachers about the used teaching methods and approaches wherever they are going to take classes.

Types of Teaching Methods and Approaches

1. Grammar-Translation Method

This method is also called the Classical Method. Richards and Rogers define it as, “A way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge through the task of translating sentences and text into and out of the target language” Richards and Rogers (2002, 5). Just as its name suggests, this method of teaching English is grammar-heavy and relies a lot on translation. This is the traditional or classical way of learning a language and it is still commonly used when learning some languages. Some countries prefer this style of teaching, and the main idea behind this method is that the students learn all grammar rules, so that they are able to translate several sentences. This is particularly common for those students who wish to study literature at a deeper level. This method was the most popular and widely used method for language teaching between the years 1840 and 1940. This was used for teaching Latin. In the 19th century, it was criticized intensively because it was considered that it could not fulfil the demands.

Principles:

- Translation interprets foreign phraseology best,
- Interpretation helps better assimilation,
The structure of a foreign language is best learnt when compared with the mother-tongue, and Grammar is the soul of language.

Procedure:
- Meaning of every word interpreted in the mother tongue,
- Meanings of phrases/sentences clarified through translation, and
- Simultaneous explanation of grammar rules.

Merits:
- Vocabulary development,
- A better understanding of context,
- Based on ‘Apperceptive Theory’,
- Textbook becomes the most important aid,
- Develops the art & skill of translation, and
- Helps in testing Comprehension.

Demerits:
According to H.E. Palmer, this method is replete with several weaknesses. He catalogues these weaknesses: “It is the one which treats all languages as if they were dead and as if each consisted essentially of a collection of ancient documents to be deciphered and analyzed. It is the one that categorically ignores all considerations of phonetics, pronunciation and boldly places language on a foundation of alphabets, 55 spelling and writing systems. It assumes translation to be the main oronly procedure for the learning of vocabulary. It assumes that word and sentence structure is to be attained mainly through the memorizing of the so-called rules of grammar”. (Palmer, 1966).
- No/less emphasis on Speaking, Reading & Writing,
- Literal translation,
- A habit of translation can inhibit thinking in English,
- Quite artificial, and
- Not holistic.

II. THE DIRECT METHOD
The direct method of teaching English is also known as the Natural Method. It is used to teach several different languages and not just English. The main idea of the Direct Method is that it uses only the target language that the students are trying to learn. Its main focus is an oral skill and it is taught via repetitive drilling. Grammar is taught using an inductive way, and students need to try and guess the rules through the teacher’s oral presentation. Today, popular forms of the Direct Method are Callan and Berlitz.

It is the outcome of the reaction against the Grammar translation method. This method focuses on telling the meaning of the words through action, demonstration or real objects. This method focuses on direct thinking, doing discussion and conversation in a second language. It is an attempt and effort to form link between thought and expression and between experience and language.

Webster’s New International Dictionary says: “Direct Method is a method of teaching a foreign language, especially modern language through conversation, discussion and reading in the language itself, without the use of pupil’s language, without translation and the study of formal grammar. The first words are taught by pointing to objects or pictures or by performing actions”. (Quoted in Dr. Mowla, 2004).

According to Felix Franks, “The moment a concept (meaning) and foreign words are intimately brought into contact without the intervention of the native word, we have the direct method” (Tiwari, 2010).

Features:
- Translation banished,
- Grammar, when taught, is taught inductively,
- Oral teaching precedes reading/writing, and
- Meanings through objects/context.

Principles:
- Establish a direct bond between word/phrase/idiom and meaning,
- More emphasis on listening and speaking,
- Less importance to mother-tongue,
- Follows full sentences, and not words,
- Vocabulary is used directly,
- Grammar is ‘Grammar of use’ and not ‘Grammar of rules,
- Follows maxims- Simple to Complex; Concrete to Abstract,
- Pronunciation is taught on phonetic lines, and
- Questioning is used more often.

Merits:
- Encourages thinking,
- Enables expression,
- Develops language sense,
- Interesting,
- Rote learning discouraged,
- Develops language mastery, and
- Ample scope for activity, teaching aids.

Demerits:
- Does not work with higher classes,
- Reading and writing are sacrificed for speech,
- Expensive.
• Requires a small-sized class, and
• Time-consuming.

III. THE ORAL APPROACH

A child learns the mother-tongue with speech. The child tries to speak without knowing the meaning of the words. We need a constant practice of speech to learn a language. The learner learns the language without big effort in oral practice. It is a natural way to learn to read and write.

Merits:
• It is easy for the students as well as teachers,
• Time and effort are saved; several repetitions are possible,
• Pupils cannot do writing work before the oral practice,
• Correction can be done then and there before they pronounce the words wrongly,
• The entire class is benefitted when one of the students is corrected,
• Slow learners are motivated to learn and they come out of their shyness and fear,
• Students automatically speak by listening to others, and
• The teachers can evaluate and take measures for improvement while teaching.

Demerits:
• It is impossible to correct the pronunciation for the entire class,
• Well trained faculty is hard to find,
• This can be used for primary school, and
• Adults feel shy and awkward.

Oral work has been summarized by Earl W. Stevick as, ‘hearing before speaking, speaking before reading, and reading before writing’ Dr. Prabhavati (1992). The statement shows the emphasis given to hearing and speaking in the early stages of language learning. First comes oral, and then comes written. Each language has its structure. So, the languages differ from one another. Language is learnt by repeating. Drilling is a good way of learning. Structure describes a language. A child learns his mother-tongue by imitating. The teacher makes effort to teach the students new sounds, and thus the child learns the correct pronunciation.

IV. SITUATIONAL APPROACH

A child learns it’s mother-tongue through the situational approach. We create a meaningful situation to teach English. For June Derrick (1992), teaching situationally means, “Both grammar and content words will be taught and used as parts of whole utterances or sentences used in meaningful situations”. In a real situation, the child learns the mother-tongue. To learn a language, we need to create a situation and the child connects his own life.

Features:
• Series of incidents,
• It is oriented on material,
• New words are learnt, and
• Pupils and teachers’ actions are focused.

Procedure:

The teacher can make use of the things which she finds in the classroom to learn new words. For example, pointing to a pen she can come out with all types of sentences:
• This is a pen. (Declarative Sentence)
• Is this a pen? (Interrogative Sentence)
• Give me your pen. (Imperative Sentence)
• What a beautiful pen is! (Exclamatory Sentence)

F.L. Billows (1961) in the “Techniques of Language Teaching” divides the classroom situations into four phases:

First Phase: It is called the classroom situation. This situation includes what pupils can see, hear and touch directly in the classroom. Here, real objects are used by the teacher. For example, the teacher says: “My shirt is red.” Then, he/she can ask the pupil: “What is the colour of my shirt?” The teacher can further put several questions by creating various situations. For example: “Do you like it?” “Do you have the same colour?” etc...

Second Phase: It consists of the daily experience of the pupil. It relates to what the pupil has seen or heard directly but cannot be seen or heard at the moment in the classroom. The teacher helps pupils to recall their memories or visualize their daily experiences. For example, (i) “I am wearing a red shirt today.”

(ii) “He studied English in the morning”.

Third Phase: It consists of what the pupil has not experienced directly but what the pupil can imagine with the help of pictures and various aids. For example, by showing the picture of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the teacher will give detailed information about his life, dress and victories. Moreover, the gestures or dramatization will create an interesting situation.

Fourth Phase: It consists of what is brought to his mind through the spoken, written and printed word alone without any help through audio-visual aids. Here, the teachers help the pupils to acquire the command of language and ask them to produce the sentences with the help of the keywords.
Merits:

- A child experiences pleasure while learning this approach.
- It is a simple method.
- Repetition and action make the class active and alive.
- It’s rewarding while using the teaching aids, and
- A child can learn to pronounce the words.

Demerits:

- This approach can be used only in the classroom.
- It is only for certain words and patterns.
- It can be dull and monotonous when repetition continues.
- It cannot be used for poetry, prose and composition, and
- It is difficult to find teachers who are good at pronunciation.

The above demerits can be overcome by:

- Presentation of the new words,
- Giving students enough repetitions,
- They also should have enough activities to be engaged in, and
- Implementing continuous revision.

V. STRUCTURAL APPROACH

The British Council has done researches on the structural approach in London’s University and other places. The aim of this is, to learn a foreign language, one has to learn the structure which is more important than acquiring vocabulary. The structural approach is arranging words in a correct way that makes complete sense.

The structural approach consists of two terms. Structural means structure, and approach means to come close. This means that by using the structure a person learns English or any other language. Menon and Patel in “The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language” say, “The structural approach is based on the belief that in the learning of a foreign language, mastery of structures is more important than the acquisition of vocabulary” Pahuja (2009). This approach is also known as the ‘New-Approach’ or ‘Aural-Oral Approach’. When we use this approach to teach English, one needs to think of the child’s ability, age, mental situation, and amount of time given for teaching English. We also need to think of the teacher’s ability and access to the teaching material. Some structures have many meanings according to the situations. One needs to select based on frequency, simplicity and the ability to teach. We need to move from simple to complex. The Structural Approach is used for teaching English.

Fries describes this: “The fundamental feature of this approach to language teaching is a new basis, to build the teaching materials. This new approach to the selection and ordering of materials rests upon a scientific descriptive analysis of the language of the learner, a scientific descriptive analysis of the language to be learnt and a systematic comparison of these two descriptive analyses to bring out completely the difference of structural patterning of the two language systems” Fries, C.C., (1955). Brewington defines the structural approach as, “a scientific study of fundamental structures of English language, their analysis and logical arrangements”. Pahuja, N.P., (2009).

What is a structure?

A structure is a means for learning English or any other language. To teach grammar we do not need structure. For learning the language, we need structural approaches.

“Structures may be complete patterns or they may form a part of a large pattern.” C.S. Bhandari defines it as “the different arrangements or patterns of words”. (86).

Generally speaking, the structural approach to the teaching of English refers to the language material organized for presentation. It is a new way of learning grammar through language use. J.B. Burton, in a working paper presented at Nagpur Seminar in 1958, summarizes the assumptions of the Structural Approach:

- “The English language is primarily a spoken thing and therefore, our approach to a foreign language should in the first instance be through its spoken form,
- Mastery over the signalling system of a language is more important than detailed knowledge of the forms of language,
- This mastery is best acquired by the repetition of various components of a system in varied forms,
- Since the language arises from the situation, the teacher’s task is to create meaningful sentences from which language will arise easily and naturally, and
- Mastery of a given range of structures and confidence in their use are best imparted by concentrating on the teaching of one item at a time.

Merits:

- The students are happy and contented when they can speak by using the structure. The structured approach motivates them to learn more,
- This also helps the students learn vocabulary which is also useful in their daily speech,
- This approach provides many opportunities to learn many methods and techniques,
- It also helps them to imitate and drill in the sentence
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patterns,
- It helps the teachers to acquire mastery over teaching,
- Language learning becomes natural because it is an oral and situational approach,
- In this approach, the teachers simplify, select carefully the material and pre sent it systematically to the pupils,
- As we train the students drilling orally the students can remember all they have learnt,
- The teacher does not find difficulty in controlling the whole class,
- The students can express their ideas and feel free,
- The teachers can use this method for all the stages of education,
- It creates a good atmosphere to learn the language, and
- Both students and teachers are active and energetic in this method.

Demerits:
- In a large class, this cannot be used.
- Overuse makes it dull and uninteresting.
- It is useful mostly for the lower classes.
- A proper selection of sentences is needed.
- Prose, poetry, grammar and vocabulary cannot be taught in this approach.
- The teacher has to present the topic to the students well.
- Sometimes it may be difficult to finish the syllabus in time.
- Reading and explanation of vocabulary are neglected in this approach.
- Structures alone will not give the fluency of speech.

VI. AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD

The Audiolingual Method is also known as the 'Army Method', because, after the outbreak of World War II, the army soldiers decided to be proficient in the languages of their enemies. So, a new learning method of foreign languages which is known as the Audiolingual Method was discovered. This method is based on linguistic theory and behavioural psychology. The Audiolingual Method was widely used in the 1950s and 1960s. The emphasis was not on the understanding of the words, but on the acquisition of structures and patterns in common everyday dialogues (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The teaching of oral skills with accurate pronunciation, grammar and the ability to respond quickly and accurately is the main objective of the Audiolingual Method. Reading and writing skills may be taught but they are dependent on oral skills (Richard and Rodgers, 1986).

During the last few decades, there is a development in science and technology; the need of speaking a foreign language emerged in various countries. Now, there is a worldwide awakening on the importance of English to achieve the target. At present, the method that we are using to achieve the goal of communication is called “The Aural Oral Method”. This method aims to develop listening and speaking skills first as the foundation. As ‘Aural and Oral’ was difficult to pronounce, the method was given another name, viz., ‘Audio Linguual Method’ by Nelson Brookes of Yale University. However, the origin of the Audio-Linguual Method is found in the work of American Structural Linguists and Cultural Anthropologists who were working at the beginning of the twentieth century on the line of the behaviourist school of psychologists. Williams, Moulton, a linguistic scientist and a foreign language teacher, has summarized the “five slogans of the day” (Dr Pabhavati, 1992). These are the assumptions that guided the experts in applying the results of linguistic research to the preparation of materials and classroom teaching.

They are:
- A language is a speech, not writing,
- A language is a set of habits,
- Teach the language, not about the language,
- A language is what its native speaker says, not what someone thinks they ought to say, and
- Languages are different.

Wilga Rivers (1968) examines these principles to see what bearing they have. Based on the above, the aims of the foreign language teaching as advocated by the Pioneers of the Audio-Linguual Method are indicated below:

- For an Audio-Linguual teacher, grammar is a means to an end. To quote Moulton Williams, (1961) “The real goal of illustration was an ability to talk the language and not to talk about it.”
- The advocates of the Audio-Linguual Method emphasized the primacy of speech on the ground that all normal children learn to speak much before they learn to read and write. Its pedagogical implication is that oral presentation should precede written presentation. It shifts an emphasis from reading and writing and leads to a radical change in the type of material selected as a basis for teaching in the early stages.
- B.F. Skinner (1957) finds language as verbal behaviour. For him, like the social behaviour of the child, linguistic behaviour is also modifiable.

Features:
- This method recommends teaching the language skills in the order of listening, speaking, reading and
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writing.
- The development of communicative skills. The dialogues are constituted by day-to-day expressions, basic structures and a useful but controlled vocabulary. The process which is used in this method to learn the dialogue is mimicry-memorization.
- The method uses pattern drilling to teach the basic structures. While using this method practically, the students listen to their teacher or model on tape until they can distinguish the sound and the intonation pattern. Then students go to repeat in groups first and then individually. This could be a playful activity, where children repeat in rows, exchanging their roles. After the dialogue has been learnt, a personal situation should be contrived to facilitate practical application or use of that particular expression, which will consolidate learning. By using the expression and conversations, the students are introduced to reading and writing to find out their weaknesses.

Merits:
- Students get highly motivated to learn a foreign language. They get enjoyment in daily communication. In the Audio-Linguial Method, more emphasis is laid on listening and speaking in the early stages, because they are considered the basis of the rest of the skills. In the middle and the higher stages, emphasis is laid on reading and writing,
- Teaching materials in this method are scientifically and systematically developed. Pupils spend more time in contrasting L1 and L2 features, which pose problems to the learner due to the inference from the mother-tongue,
- This method emphasizes the development of the four basic skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Moreover, it endeavours to develop the understanding of foreign culture and foreign people, and
- This method helps to develop comprehension and fluency in speaking. From the beginning, the student learns segments of language. He/she is also trained to understand and produce foreign language utterances.

Demerits:
There are certain drawbacks of this method, but they can be avoided if the teacher is aware of them.
- The Audio-Linguial Method is blamed for its criterion of only well-trained parrots, who repeat the utterances promptly without knowing their meaning. As a result, the child will be lacking in the ability to transfer learning to practical situations. To avoid these, pupils must be trained even from the beginning to apply what they have memorized or practised in pattern drills,
- It has also been objected that the techniques of memorization and drilling in this method can become intensely tedious, causing fatigue and disinterest on the part of the students. An unimaginative teacher who has staunch faith but is not sensitive enough to the students’ reactions can very well aggravate this problem. As a remedy for this, the teacher should necessarily be inventive and resourceful in creating situations and presenting the structures,
- In this method, the students are trained to make variations on language patterns by a process of analogy. So, they do not understand the possibilities and limitations of usage that fail the particular drill,
- The Audio-Linguial Method presupposes a homogenous group with mental attitude and aptitude. But the pupils do differ in their capacity to learn the language and the method through which they can learn easily. Some students feel more insecure when they are forced to depend on the ear alone as they lack auditory memory, and
- There is objection regarding the time lag which exists between the presentations of language material orally and the presentation of the same imprinted or written form. Experiments in it offer twenty-four-hour oral work before the students are introduced to graphic form. Here, the lag obviates the interference of the mother-tongue in pronunciation through the written symbols.

However, the Audio-Linguial Method is not apt for all types of students. Experience has shown this method to be very useful for younger children who mimic the act out roles and learn through explanations and facts. This method makes considerable demands upon the teacher. This method also calls for sustaining energy to carry on oral practice for three or more classes.

VII. COOPERATIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING

CLL is a learning technique which depends on activities that enhance the student – student interaction (Arendale 2005; Heba and Nouby 2007). McCafferty et al. (2004) defined CLL and highlighted the importance of equal opportunities in order to make the process of CLL more effective. Today’s children are tomorrow’s citizens and destiny shapers of any country.

The Kothari Education Commission (1964–66) observed and said, “The destiny of India is being shaped in their classrooms.” Therefore, it is essential to develop the logical and creative thinking of children optimally inside the
classrooms through CLL with each other. The students are responsible for one another’s learning, and the success becomes inter dependent. The concept of a Cooperative Classroom promotes either to Sink or to Swim together, entirely different from the traditional classes which are individualistic and highly competitive. Cooperation and helping in team spirit is the soul of this method, thus creating an atmosphere of team achievement. CLL trends to organize classroom activities into an academic and social learning experience.

Students work through the assignments until all group members successfully understand and complete them. Thus, CLL practices share learning materials, divide up the work to complete the assignments, help the other team members of the group, receive awards based on the group’s performance, and enjoy the fruit of the labour together.

In CLL, all the members of the group have to work on the common principle of ‘Sink or Swim together’, i.e., all the group members can earn the mutual benefit for all group members from each other’s efforts, and feel proud and celebrate together when an individual is recognized by his/her achievement.

CLL is an organized strategy for small groups of students in which they work together to identify the solutions to the given problems. The students automatically organize their own learning with the distribution of tasks among themselves rather than following the instructions from teachers. The students intensely feel their own responsibilities and learning is no more a burden, and instead converted into more fun. It is like using multiple intelligences, interests, attitudes, aptitudes, achievements, etc, at a single time. Despite these individual differences, students take the opportunity unknowingly to learn from individual instructions for their development to the optimum level of their own potential.

In this way, CLL stimulates creative thinking, divergent thinking, decision making, and problem-solving skills in students. CLL also utilizes diversities of academic abilities, ethnic background, race and gender, regardless of which students choose to assist each other using their own individual perspective, strategy and approach to complete given assignments, laboratory experiments, and projects. CLL thus, facilitates the improvement in quality of decision-making abilities, interaction with others, finding a variety of solutions to different problems, and generating new ideas. At the same time, it naturally creates conflicts of ideas, opinions, conclusions and theories. Besides, the cooperative learning activities also encourage the development of essential communication skills, positive self-esteem, social awareness, motivation, positive attitude towards subject and school, tolerance for individual differences, group interaction, social skills, and self-confidence.

Team is a group of individuals coming together in an organized form for achieving some common goals, where each member has equal accountability. It focuses on accomplishment of goals of entire team. There is a democratic nature in the team management; they work collectively to accomplish certain goals.

Team members share the responsibility and have high visibility. There are fewer conflicts because of small groups and common goals. There is more scope, praising and rewards due to recognition of individuals.

**Definition of Cooperative Language Learning**

First, here are some definitions of cooperative learning (also known as collaborative learning):

The instruction uses small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1993, P.9).

Principles and techniques for helping students work together more effectively (Jacobs, Power, & Loh, 2002, p. 1).

The point is that cooperative learning involves more than just asking students to work together in groups. Instead, conscious thought goes into helping students make the experience successful.

**Benefits of Cooperative Learning**

A cooperative situation helps create that atmosphere, because, participants give encouragement and support to one another. Cooperative has been linked to greater learning, emotional maturity and strong personal identity.

**Leadership Skills**: For a cooperative learning group to succeed, individuals within the group need to show leadership abilities. Leadership skills that can be taught and practiced through cooperative learning include:

- Delegating.
- Organizing work,
- Supporting others, and
- Ensuring that goals are being met.

Natural leaders become quickly evident in small groups, but most students will not feel naturally inclined to lead. Assign leadership roles of varying prominence to every member of a group to help all individuals practice leading.

**Teamwork Skills**: All cooperative learning activities help students practice working in teams. As Bill Gates, Co-founder of Microsoft says: “Teams should be able to act with the same unity of purpose and focus as a well-motivated individual.”
Teamwork-building exercises teach students to trust each other to achieve more together than would otherwise be possible.

**Communication Skills:** Effective teamwork requires good communication and commitment. All members of a cooperative learning group have to learn to speak productively with one another to stay on track. By teaching students to share confidently, listen intently, and speak clearly, they learn to value the input of their team mates and the quality of their work soars.

**Conflict Management Skills:** Conflicts are bound to arise in any group setting. Sometimes these are minor and easily handled, and at other times they can rip a team apart if improperly managed. Give students space to try and work out their issues for themselves before stepping in. With that said, always monitor class during cooperative learning. Teach students how to work things out with each other.

**Decision-Making Skills:** Make sure that each student has his/her responsibilities in cooperative groups. Thus, the classroom often offers a student first experience in practicing most life skills. Teachers should deliberately create opportunities for students to cooperate, share responsibilities, solve problems, and control conflict. These opportunities can be found in cooperative learning, which differs from individualistic or traditional learning where students work independently, and sometimes even against each other. Cooperative learning activities require students to work together in small groups to complete a project or activity, operating as a team to help each other succeed.

**Merits**

- Achieving Excellence,
- Building Teamwork,
- Effective Communication,
- Time Management,
- Higher Self-esteem,
- Better Attitudes towards Teacher and School,
- Retention Increase,
- Improved Academic,
- Higher Level Thinking Skills,
- Personal Responsibility,
- Self-awareness,
- More Positive Relationships and a Wider Circle of Friends,
- Greater Intrinsic Motivation,
- More on-task behaviour,
- Build Positive Relationships among Students,
- Reduce Violence,
- Openness, Trust and Safety,
- Self-worth and Personal Power, and
- Well-being.

**Demerits**

- Lack of Social Skill,
- Time Requirements, and
- Arguments among Students.

**References**


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