

Methods And Approaches Of English Language Teaching

Today, English is the world's most widely studied foreign language. Five hundred years ago, Latin was the most dominant language to be studied because it was the language of business, commerce and education in the western world. In the sixteenth century, however, French, Italian and English gain in importance as a result of political change in Europe and Latin gradually became displaced as a language of spoken and written communication (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Latin became a dead language. It was being started to read in the books as classic language. Children started to enter in the grammar schools in sixteenth and eighteenth centuries to learn grammar rules of Latin. To learn Latin language became a mental gymnastic. In the eighteenth century, when modern languages began to enter in the curriculum of the European countries, these languages were taught by the same methods as Latin language was taught. Grammatical rules were memorized. Written practices were done. The passages were translated from the second language to the first language and vice versa.

By the nineteenth century, this method was considered as a standard method of teaching language. The textbooks were divided into chapters. Each chapter contained a certain grammatical rule and rule was practiced with a lot of written exercises.

Methods and Approaches of English Language Teaching: -

According to Asher and James (1982), Methods are the combination of techniques that are used and plasticized by the teachers in the classrooms in order to teach their students and approaches are the philosophies of teachers about language teaching that can be applied in the classrooms by using different techniques of language teaching. For example, if a teacher has an approach that language is the communication and learning a language is in fact learning the meanings, functions and uses of language. So the techniques will be based on the communicative language teaching and task based methods.

According to Freeman (2000), Methods which are taught to the teachers make a base and give them thinking about the applicable techniques and principles according to the situation where they stand. They are clear about their attraction towards certain methods and also think that why have they repelled certain method. The knowledge of method is very necessary because their knowledge is base of teaching.



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Followings are some of the methods of teaching English: -

Grammar cum Translation Method

Grammar translation method was the most popular and widely used method for language teaching between the ages of 1840 to 1940. But this method was first used for teaching and learning Latin language which was not the language of common use at that time. Latin was considered as a classic language. The learners were made able to study the literature of Latin language through learning the grammatical rules of language and learning the vocabulary so that learners may translate the language in their first language and in the second language. Grammar translation method was criticized intensively in the nineteenth century because it was considered that this method cannot fulfil the demands of language learning in nineteenth century.

Direct Method

The direct method was the outcome of the reaction against the grammar translation method. It was based on the assumption that the learners of foreign and second language should directly think in English. This method is against the translation of written and oral text and focuses on telling the meanings of the words through action, demonstration or real objects. This method focuses on directly thinking, doing discussion and conversation in second language (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Purwarno (2006) described the aims of the direct method. He described that direct method is an attempt and effort to form a link between thought and expression and between experience and language.

Direct method was criticized due to the following reasons:

Direct method is successful in private language schools because this method can be applied only in small classes where all the learners can get individual attention.

In Direct method, the teachers extravagantly excel in keeping the mother tongue of the learners away from them.



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Direct method demands the learners to do oral communication in the second language and it also demands the pronunciation and accent to be just like the native speakers so there is need for the language school to hire the native speakers which actually can be very expensive.

The success of the direct method depends on the teacher's skills and personality more than on the methodology (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

Structural Approach

The structural approach mainly employs the techniques of the direct method but the reading and writing skills are not wholly neglected. The structural approach is based on the sound principles of language learning. The structural approach says that the arrangement of the words in such a way as to form a suitable pattern and that pattern may make the meanings of the language clear to us. Any language has its own structure and skeleton which gives this language a decent appearance. A structure is a pattern and a particular arrangement of words which to indicate grammatical meanings. It may be a word, a phrase or a sentence.

Structural approach was criticized because it was only suitable for lower grades. Continuous teaching of structures and their repetition make the atmosphere dull and boring. It also neglected the reading and writing abilities and there was also a lack of skilled teachers.

Oral Approach/ Situational Language Teaching

The oral approach is a method in which children to use whatever hearing they get from their surroundings. They also take help from the context to understand and use language. The target is to develop the skills in the individual so that he can communicate and function independently. This approach helps in the development of reading and writing skills (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

The oral approach was developed from 1930s to the 1960s by British applied linguistics such as Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornsby. The main difference between oral approach and the direct method was that the methods which were developed under this approach had theoretical principles about the selection, grading and presentation of the content and material. This sequencing of the content would lead to better learning with a good knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical patterns. In this approach all the points of language were to be presented in 'situations' which led to the second name of the approach i.e. situational language teaching. Although, the teachers are not aware of this approach today but it had



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long lasting impact on language learning. However, its focus on oral practice, grammar and sentence patterns is still supported by the teachers.

Audio-Lingual Method

Audio-lingual method is also known as '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 was discovered which is known as audio-lingual method. This method is based on a linguistic theory and behavioural psychology. The audio-lingual method was widely used in the 1950s and 1960s and the emphasis was not on the understanding of the words rather on acquisition of structures and patterns in common everyday dialogues (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

The teaching of the oral skills with accurate pronunciation, grammar and the ability to respond quickly and accurately is the main objective of audio-lingual method. Reading and writing skills may be taught but they are dependent on the oral skills (Richard and Rodgers, 1986).

Total Physical Response

In Total Physical Response (TPR), the teacher gives the students instructions and the students follow the instructions by using whole body responses. James J. Asher, a professor, of psychology at San Jose State University developed the method Total Physical Response in late 1960s to help in learning second languages (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

According to Asher (1977), 'TPR is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language on earth including the sign language of the deaf'. We can see this process if we observe the language learning process of an infant. The communication between parents and the child consists of both verbal and physical aspects. When the child is not able to speak, at the time he/she is internalizing the language. This is the time when code breaking occurs. After this process the child becomes able to speak and reproduce language. In TPR, the teacher repeats the process in the class. Students respond to the commands of the teacher which require physical movement. TPR is most useful for beginners. TPR is also used for teaching students with dyslexia or related learning disabilities.



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Silent Way

Silent way is the method of language teaching which was proposed by Caleb Gattegno. This method is based on the view that the teachers should be silent in the classroom as much as possible but the teacher must encourage the students to speak and use the language. The most important aspect of this method is its elements that are used for language teaching i.e. coloured charts and coloured rods (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

This method focuses on the learners to discover on their own rather than they remember or memorize something. The learners are facilitated in learning by giving them some problem to solve which involves the materials that are needed to be learnt.

Dr. West's new method

Dr. West conducted an extensive research and experiments on the problems of teaching English as a foreign language in India. Read More Teaching English The new method is the outcome of his research. It stood as a reaction against the Direct Method.

Dr. West approached the problem of teaching English not from the standpoint of pedagogy, but from the standpoint of social needs of the Indian people. He holds that, "Indian boys need most of all to be able to read English, than to write it, and lastly to speak it and understood it when spoken". Read More Teaching English Moreover, he maintains that "learning to read a language is by far the shortest road to learning to speak and write it. "According to him it is easier to acquire a reading knowledge of a language than to acquire a speaking. So the teacher's chief concern should be to develop the habit of purposeful silent reading in the children and not the habit of oral reading. The West's method puts emphasis on three important elements. First, reading, Secondly, Readers with selected vocabulary and thirdly, judicious use of the mother tongue.

Above mentioned methods are some of the essential methods of teaching English.