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Structural Approach

It is also known as Aural-oral Approach. Each language has its own pattern of structure. The structural approach is an outcome of the experiments carried out in language teaching in the army campus during World War II. Meaningful words are used in particular order. Every structure embodies an important grammatical point. A sentence needs a grammatical background. The different arrangements or patterns of words are called structures. Here words are used in particular order to convey their sense and meaning. In this way structures are the tools of language and should not be confused with sentences. According to Brewington "Structural approach is a scientific study of the fundamental structures of the English language, their analysis and logical arrangement". The structural approach to English is teaching the learner certain selected structures in a certain order. The different arrangement or patterns of words are called structures. Structure may be complete patterns or they may form a part of a large pattern. Language is viewed as structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, structures and sentence types.

In the structural approach there may be four kinds of structures namely; Sentence patterns; Phrase patterns; Formulas and Idioms. Sentence Pattern are the word model from sentence types structures words morphemes phonemes which many things of the same kind and shape can be made like cars which look the same or shoes made alike all of the same size and shape though perhaps of different colours. A sentence pattern is therefore a model for sentence which will be of the same shape and construction although made up of different words. Phrase Pattern is a group of words which express an idea without its being a sentence of clause e.g. in the house, on the table, into the tub etc. Formulas are those words which are used on certain occasions e.g. How are you? Good morning; Thank you; etc. Idioms like 'Rome was not built in a day', 'hit the iron when it is hot', etc. come in this category. These should be taught as a whole.



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Principles of Structural Approach:-

It is based on three main principles:

- (i) Importance is given to student's activity rather than the activity of the teacher.
- (ii) Importance is given to speech work.
- (iii) Importance is given in developing correct language habits among the students, particularly the habits of arranging words in English in order to replace the sentence patterns of the pupil's mother tongue.

Aims of Structural Approach:-

The main aim of structural approach is to teach four fundamental skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. It also enlarges the vocabulary of the student's. It correlates the teaching of grammar and composition with the lessons of the text-book. It improves and corrects pupil's speech habit. It makes classroom environment interesting and natural. It develops student's interest in creating meaningful situations. It lays proper emphasis on the aural-oral approach, active methods and the condemnation of formal grammar for its own sake. It also enables the children to attain mastery over an essential vocabulary of about 3000 root words for active use.

Merits of the Structural Approach: –

The merits of this approach are that it can be adopted for all stages of education. It stress habit formation, through intensive drills, the students cultivate the habit of speaking the English language, due to much oral drilling, whatever is learnt in the class remains stable in the minds of the students. It provides enough opportunities to the students to express their ideas and feelings and makes both teacher and students active which is psychologically sound. It puts more emphasis on speech or oral aspects of learning. The students are provided with carefully selected and graded language material. Making use of this approach the teacher can attend to more or almost all students of his class.

Demerits of the structural Approach:-

The demerits of this approach are that it is suitable only in lower classes. Only well selected sentence patterns are taught through this approach. It is rarely successful in overcrowded classroom. It neglects reading of all types. This approach does not take into consideration the



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fact that pupil is a learner. This approach needs specially planned text-books and well trained teachers to create appropriate environment for learning the language. While teaching through this approach each structure should be repeatedly taught many times with different words. The teacher should care that the students get adequate practice in the use of special words. New words should be introduced gradually and they must be corrected with the structures already taught. Sufficient practice should be given in respect of each structure before the next is introduced. New words at early stages should refer to objects and actions which can be seen and demonstrated in the classroom. Thus this approach is based on the assumption that language learning is a matter of habit formation, which involves a lot of repetition and conscious drilling of the language items.