

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF VARIOUS ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS, APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES

SIMHACHALAM THAMARANA

Abstract: This paper presents various definitions of English Language Teaching and learning related terminology like Approach, Method, Technique and Procedure are to be given. A brief note on the history of various methods and approaches along with their proponents is to be presented. Most importantly, comparative study and critical discussions are to be done in connection with various Approaches, Methods, and Techniques. Generally, every Approach or Method or Technique usually has its own merits and demerits in terms of practicability and adoptability in real classroom situations. Uses of various innovative and blended approaches are to be examined. Furthermore, discussion on most current Approaches, Methods and techniques are to be done along with their relevance to present day language learning purposes. This paper will also explore how a particular Approach or Method is useful in teaching a particular language skill, i.e. SRW. Moreover I try to provide some suggestions for an appropriate use of certain Methods and Approaches. Finally the conclusions are drawn by means of the review of literature indicated.

Keywords: Approach, ELT, Learning theory, Method, Procedure, Technique.

Introduction: Approach to teaching refers to the conceptual principles, views or assumptions that underpin the way one teaches. These beliefs may be explicit and supported by research, or they may be deeply held intuitions of which a teacher is not even explicitly aware. Approach in language teaching, the theory, philosophy and principles underlying a particular set of teaching practices. Language teaching is sometimes discussed in terms of three related aspects: approach, method, and technique. Different theories about the nature of language and how languages are learned imply different ways of teaching language, and different methods make use of different kinds of classroom activity i.e. the technique. Examples of different approaches are the aural-oral approach, the cognitive code approach, the communicative approach, etc. Examples of different methods which are based on a particular approach are the audio-lingual method, the direct method, etc. Examples of techniques used in particular methods are drills, dialogues, role-plays, sentence completion, etc. Method, in language teaching, is a way of teaching a language which is based on systematic principles and procedures, i.e. which is an application of views on how a language is best taught and learned and a particular theory of language and of language learning. Different methods of language teaching such as the direct method, the audio-lingual method, total physical response result from different views of: the nature of language, the nature of second language

learning, goals and objectives in teaching, the type of syllabus to use, the role of teachers, learners, and instructional materials, the activities, techniques and procedures to use.

Method may also be defined as: "The process of planning, selection and grading language materials and items, techniques of teaching, etc." Anthony (1963) defines the term 'Method' as: "It is a particular trick, strategy or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. It must be consistent with a method and harmony with an approach as well". According to W. E. Mackey: a Method must include four things viz., Selection of Linguistic Material, and Gradation of Linguistic Material, Techniques of presentation, and Practice. There are some prominent methods in practice like The Grammar Translation Method, The Direct Method, the Bilingual Method, The Reading Method, Total Physical Response and The Situation Method.

Technique in teaching, a specific procedure for carrying out a teaching activity, such as the ways a teacher corrects students' errors or sets up group activities. Task in teaching is an activity which is designed to help achieve a particular learning goal. A number of dimensions of tasks influence their use in language teaching. These include: goals procedures, order, pacing, product, learning strategy, assessment, participation, resources, language.

Past teaching practices are 'traditional', and traditional teaching methods are often equated with

learning grammar rules and committing grammatical paradigms to rote memory. Grammar teaching itself has also seen variability. Teach grammar inductively, or deductively, by presenting the rules for practice. There was a shift in the middle Ages from an inductive approach to a deductive one. With the rise of a French-speaking political powerhouse in Europe, for example, came the use of French among English-speaking ruling classes. Latin was still taught in Great Britain, for example, it was increasingly done through the vernacular of English.

Another factor affecting education has been innovation in technology. The development of the printing press impacted education the use of Latin was becoming restricted to writing only the vernacular replaced Latin in official documents, Latin as the official language for legal documents in Britain until the mid-1600s. Until the 1500s, Latin and Ancient Greek were the only languages whose structure was explicitly known, analysed and written down in terms of their grammatical rules, at least in Western Europe. In the Arab world, linguistic study included both these Classical languages and Arabic and other Asian languages. Yet in Europe, even when scholarly interest began to recognise vernaculars, Latin was the benchmark from which other languages were analysed and studied. The use of the vernacular meant that Latin was taught in terms of its grammatical rules and the aim limited to the ability to read Latin. teaching limited to the rules and structural paradigms of the language central to the Grammar Translation method was the idea of transmitting cultural values to be found in the Classical literature being translated.

As the need to teach other European languages as foreign languages developed, it is only natural that teachers looked to existing language teaching practices, applying them to the teaching of other languages. Thus Grammar Translation was adopted as the way to teach the living languages of Europe, including English. Addressing the limitations of Grammar Translation in the late 1800s was the so-called Reform Movement. In France, educationalists such as Gouin and Marcel proposed breaking language into the four skills and focusing on everyday language.

English reformer Henry Sweet, in his 1899 book, *The Practical Study of Languages*, also identified language points to be taught and presented them in terms of the four skills, sequencing them from simple to

complex. Another influence on the Reform Movement was the observation that children learn their native language quite early and easily. Noting that infants acquire their native language in a seemingly effortless fashion, applied linguists of the Reform Movement devised a radical departure from existing methods, advocating the Direct Method, in which instruction in the language classroom was limited exclusively to the target language. The most famous example of the Direct Method is the Berlitz School. Taking a more decisive step in the direction of universals was the most influential linguist of modern times, Noam Chomsky. Chomsky's notion of Universal Grammar developed out of this idea that all languages abide by a single set of properties unique to humans. Every language was understood to have a set of principles that controlled transformations. These linguistic principles are said to be generative because they allow for the infinite creation of structures. It is for this reason that Chomsky's approach came to be known as Transformational Generative Grammar.

Structure dependency is a key principle in formal linguistics. In 1957 the prominent psychologist, B. F. Skinner, published a book called *Verbal Behavior*, in which he argued that children learn language through imitation and habit formation. The stimulus response view of learning in general, known as Behaviourism, was argued to characterise not just general learning, but the learning of native language by young children as well. With more formal methods for communicating professional practice, the Reform Movement might have been able to move language teaching away from Grammar Translation. In the first half of the 1900s, three sets of language teaching practices developed in each of the three large English-speaking regions of the world. The Oral Approach that developed in England had much in common with the Situational Approach that developed in the Australian context.

After Audiolingual Approach of North America, like other early applied linguists, Harold Palmer and A. S. Hornby in England looked to structuralist linguistics and psychological notions of language development to inform their Oral Approach to language teaching. Central to the Oral Approach was the idea that new language points should be presented in context.

Situational Approach which developed in Australia among applied linguists led by George Pittman. The Situational Approach made use of objects, pictures

and other realia to present new language points. Overlap between the Oral/Situational Approaches and Audiolingualism can be found in the emphasis on oral skills, with literacy a secondary concern. Proponents of Audiolingualism made much of the belief that a learner needs to perceive language accurately before it can be correctly produced. This emphasis on the aural was a direct result of the influence of Behaviourism. The behaviourists viewed language as primarily speech, not writing. Speech was seen as a precondition for writing. Audiolingualism was the political context of the time. The 1900s saw two world wars, with new global powers emerging in the mid-1900s. The development of Audiolingualism came from funding provided by the United States military, which had identified a great need for language specialists to support the efforts of the emerging superpower. The very structured and authority-bound nature of Audiolingualism was no doubt compatible with a military environment. For Audio-lingualism, learning required repeated drilling of one language pattern at a time. Applied linguist, Charles Fries, contributed to the development of Audiolingualism with his study of the structural similarities and differences between languages.

In Audio-lingual method, language learning is a process of habit formation. It is important for teachers to prevent student error since errors can lead to the formation of bad habits. Students should over-learn the sentence patterns of the target language and positive reinforcement helps students to develop correct habits. Various teaching points, vocabulary, grammar, expressions along with some cultural points are to be included in this method. Some important objectives to be achieved in this method as follows:

1. The students will be able to recite the dialogue from memory with few or no mistakes.
2. The students will learn all of the new vocabulary items and be able to use them when reciting the dialogue and doing the grammar drills.
3. The students will be able to do the grammar drills smoothly, quickly, and without mistakes.
4. The students will realize that sometimes people do some particular cultural or traditional activities in a particular nation or a community.

Since language in the early 1950s was seen as a set of habits, learning a second language was seen as an attempt to change existing language habits to a new set of habits. This process was seen as involving what is known as language transfer. Lado's Contrastive

Analysis Hypothesis proposed that there would be difficulties in language learning where there are differences between the native and target language, and ease where there are similarities between the two languages. Error Analysis, a research agenda first promoted by Pit Corder, directly challenged the behaviourist basis of Contrastive Analysis, appealing instead to the Creative Construction Hypothesis, which tried to apply Chomsky's view of natural, innate language development to second language learning. Noam Chomsky's view of language has had a lasting impact, giving rise to a new field of linguistics known as Generative Linguistics. The two main tenets of Chomsky's view of language are that language is constrained by universal principles and that these principles are an innate biological property of humans.

In Community Language Learning, students are considered as whole persons. The predominant idea behind this method is that people learn best when they feel secure. So students should have the opportunity to generate the language they wish to learn and the teacher should "understand" what the students are feeling. Meaning and pronunciation of student generated vocabulary for describing any day to day events as teaching points in this method. Some important objectives are to be set in this method like students generating, clarifying the meaning of and practice the pronunciation of a list of vocabulary words needed to describe the events. Students will create an image of their home in a fellow student's mind through words and they will learn about each other's worlds and thus strengthen the learning community in the class room.

In Comprehension Approach / Total Physical Response Approach meaning in the target language can often be conveyed through actions. Retention is enhanced when learners respond physically and feelings of success and low anxiety facilitate learning. So, listening comprehension comes first. Students will speak when they are ready. Psychologist James Asher's method, Total Physical Response, is being offered as an example of a general approach called the Comprehension Approach. It is like Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach. Asher bases his method on the observation that a baby spends many months listening to the people around it long before it ever says a word. The child has the time to try to make sense out of the sounds it hears. No one tells the baby that it must speak. The child chooses to speak when

it is ready. Some of the most prominent objectives are in this approach, to enable students to understand the vocabulary presented and enable them to demonstrate understanding by responding to single commands and sequences of commands. Moreover students able to give commands to their peers and respond to those commands and by students will have fun during the lesson. In Communicative Approach, the primary goal of language teaching is enabling students to use the language to communicate. So communication involves using language functions as well as grammar structures. Mostly language is used in a social context and should be appropriate to setting, topic, and participants. Students involved in this approach should be given an opportunity to negotiate meaning, i.e., to try to make themselves understood and students should be able to express their opinions and share their ideas and feelings, i.e., learn to communicate by communicating. The Communicative Approach, it is acknowledged that structures and vocabulary are important. However, adherents of the Communicative Approach feel that students must master the functions or purposes to which it is put before they will be able to truly use the language.

In Suggestopedia, Learning is facilitated in a pleasant, comfortable environment. The more confident the students feel, the better they will learn. In this approach, communication takes place on two planes. When there is a unity between them, learning is

enhanced. So the means of activating the material should be varied and playful. In Silent Way, teaching should be subordinate to learning and language is not learned by repeating after a model; students need to develop their own "inner criteria" for correctness. In this approach, errors are important and necessary to learning. Most prominently, it is the students who should be practicing the language, not the teacher. The central principle of Gattegno's Silent Way is that "teaching should be subordinated to learning." This means, in part, that the teacher bases his lesson on what the students are learning in the moment, not what he wants to teach them.

Conclusion: No method is complete within itself but the merits of each of these methods can be successfully used in order to teach anyone of the four language skills. From this paper, we can say that there are different methods and approaches in making a learner proficient in the four major language skills. In order to teach listening skill one can use Audio-lingual method and for speaking skill Direct Method, Communicative Approach etc. For teaching Reading skill, one can use Dr. West's Reading method. Writing skill can be successfully taught to students by using Grammar Translation Method. The teachers and learners of English language can use any of these methods on the basis of the purpose and individual competency in employing them. By using different methods and techniques teaching can be made innovative and interesting.

References:

1. Richards, Jack C and Rodgers, Theodore S. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. United State of America: Cambridge University Press. 2001. Print.
2. Patel, M. F. and M. Jain, Praveen. *English Language Teaching (Methods, Tools and Techniques)*. Jaipur: Sunrise Publishers and Distributors, 2005. Print.
3. Richards, Jack C, Schmidt, Richard. *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Linguistics*. Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited. 2010. Print.
4. Howatt, A. P. R. *A History of English Language Teaching*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. 1997. Print.
5. Richards, Jack C and Renandya, Willy A. Ed. *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Print.
6. Rogova, G. V. *Methods of Teaching English*. Print. Whong, Melinda. *Language Teaching Linguistic Theory in Practice*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd. 2011. Print.
7. Hinkel, Eli. Ed. *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 2005. Print.
8. Graddol, David. *English Next India: the future of English in India*. England and Wales: British Council. 2010. Print.

Mr. Simhachalam Thamarana / Research Scholar / Dept. Of English/ Andhra University /
Thamarana.simhachalam@gmail.com