A Bird's Eye View on Approaches and Methods in English Language Teaching

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Abstract

"For much of his history of Language Teaching has been obsessed with the search for the right-method'. It was felt that somewhere or other there was a method which would work for all learners in all contexts and that once such method has been found the language teaching 'problem' would be solved for ever. Most recently it has been realized that there never was and probably never will be a method for all'. (David Nunan, **Language Teaching Mothodology; A text book for teachers – 54)**[1]**.**

Applied linguists such as Henry Sweet (1845-1912) and Harold Palmer (1877-1949) have laid the foundation for the new approaches and methods for language teaching. This was based on approach, design and procedure and they thought these are the basic principles for language teaching. Edward Antony in 1963 has identified three levels of conceptualization and organization of lessons, as approach, method and techniques. Here approaches refer to theories about the nature of language and language learning. They serve as the source of practice and principles in language teaching. The three major approaches and methods in language teaching are structural, functional and experimental approach. Designing method is the level of method analysis in which the following factors are discussed; the objectives of a method, the types of learning tasks and teaching activities the method advocates and the roles of learner, of teacher and of instruction materials. Procedure discusses classroom techniques, practice and behavior observed when the method is used in the classroom.

New Methods

The decade 1970 – 80 is called the period of method concept, thousands of linguists have been researching for a new method and hundreds of methods were suggested and experimented in school some of the methods of these periods are:
Psychological Approach   :
i) Cognitive Code Learning.
ii) Audio – Lingual Method.

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Second Language Acquisition:
i) Total Physical Response
ii) Natural Approach.
Humanistic Approach   :
i) Community Language Teaching
ii) Silent way of Language Teaching
Lecture Method
Communicative Language Teaching

i). The Audio – Lingual Approach: The term Audio – Lingualism was coined by Professor **Nelson Brook** in 1964. He claimed to have transformed language teaching from art to science, which would help learners to achieve mastery of foreign language effectively and efficiently. This method is the combination of structural linguistic theory, aural – oral procedures and behaviorist psychology. Its primary aim is to provide methodological foundation for materials for the teaching of foreign languages at schools and colleges.

ii). The Total Physical Response Method: This is a language teaching method developed by **James Asher**, a Professor of Psychology at Saint Jose State University, California. It attempts to teach language through activity. Here physical response refers to motor activities like memory, verbal, rehearsal accompanied by motor activity and rote learning. According to Asher, second language learning is parallel to child's first language acquisition. He has said that speech directed to young children in form of commands, which children respond to physically before verbal response is the first step of language acquisition. According to him adults should recapitulate the process by which children acquire their mother tongue. Asher's stress is on developing comprehension skills before the development of spoken activity. The approach is sometimes referred to as the comprehension approach.

iii). **Natural Approach**: The method was developed by **Tracy Terrell,** a teacher of Spanish in California. **Terrell with Stephen Krashen** developed a theoretical rational for the Natural approach. They called their approach as traditional approach. Traditional approaches are defined as 'based on the use of language in communicative situations without recourse to the native language' (Richards C. Jack, **Approaches and methods in language Teaching** – 79)[2]. Characteristics of this approach are:

- There is an emphasis on exposure or input, rather than practice: optimizing emotional preparedness for learning.
- Two **mental processes** are at work in second language learning: Acquisition and Learning.
- This method belongs to a tradition of language teaching methods based on **observation and interpretation** of how learners acquire both first and second languages in non – formal settings.

iv). *Community Language Teaching (CLT): Community language Teaching is a teaching method developed by* **Acurran** *and his associates. He was a specialist in counseling and a Professor of Psychology at Loyola University at Chicago. Community Language Learning (CLT), defines the role of teacher and learners in the classroom.* **Moskowitz's** *definition for Humanistic approach was "Blend what the student feels, thinks and knows with what he is learning in the target language. Rather than self – denial being the acceptable way of life, self – actualization and self – esteem are the ideas the exercise pursue. The Techniques help build report, cohesiveness, they carry that to transcend what is already there… help students to be themselves, to accept themselves, and be proud of themselves… help foster climate of caring and sharing in the foreign language class".* **(Roger – Methods and Approaches to language Teaching, 43)[3].** Community Language Teaching compares language learning to stages of human growth such as stage – I, **'Infant Stage'** – Learner completely dependent on what is known for linguistic content. Stage – II '**Child achieves** a measure of independence from the parent Stage – III', **'the Separate – existence stage'** : learners being to understand others directly in the target language, stage IV **' a kind of adolescence'** stage V is called 'the **Independence Stage'** learners learn to understand as well as to use the language correctly.

v). Silent way of Language Teaching: This is a Language teaching method profounded by **Caleb Gattegno.** It is based on the premise that the teacher should be silent as much as possible in the classroom and the learners should be encouraged to produce as much as possible. He says that "Surrender to the melody of a language as to music will bring to an unconscious of all the spring of the language, that has been stored in the melody, it cannot be reached otherwise". (Jack C.Richard, **Approaches and Methods in Language**

teaching – 127)[4]. According to Gettegno learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates reather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned and learning is facilitated by accompanying physical objects.

vi) Suggestopedia: This is a teaching method developed by the Bulgarian psychiatrist and **EDUCATOR Georgi Lazanov.** It is a set of learning recommendations derived from suggest logy. According to suggestopeadia; there is no sector of life where suggestology in learning accelerated twenty five times more than that of learning by conventional methods. He suggests optimal learning environment in great detail. A most conspicuous feature of suggestopedia is the centrality of music and musical rhythm to learning.

vii) The Lecture Method: This method was aimed at providing some practical suggestions for effective teaching to assess the students ability and teaching quality. This also covers course planning, presentation of lessons, class room management, students feedback and assessment teaching quality, evaluation and means of teaching abilities. The suggested learning tasks were formal lecture, active lecture, tutorial / exercise class, seminar, role play / game, laboratory classes, personal tutoring, open learning, and so on. This method may fiter for different subjects; for example formal lectures are often favored in science and engineering subject whereas discussion is more appropriate in arts and social studies.

viii) Communicative Method: **Geoffery Leech** in his book A **communicative Grammar of English** 5says, "The Grammar of a language is indeed of central concern to students, since it describes what makes language trick-how the meaning we want to communicate" (27).

An important aspect of communicative Grammar is know the appropriate choice according to the situation one is in. until the 1970's it was believed that language teaching methods adhere to a grammatical syllabus. The former methods reject grammar instructions in the separate classes but his method accepts a role of grammar learning. In the later developments rules are made explicit. This is a kind of experimental learning and purely communication based but has a strong grammar basis. This is a revolutionary method in the history of language teaching methods. Until today it plays a dominant role in the language teaching methods. What the communicative language teaching even in Britain grammar rules reappeared in course books and grammar teaching re-emerged in class rooms. The major exponents of this method were **Wilkins, Widdowson, Brumfit, Kith Johnson** and other British applied linguists. The council of Europe incorporated wilkins' communicative analysis in to a set of specifications for a first - level communicative language syllabus. This primary success has a strong influence on the design of communicative language syllabus. This primary success has a strong influence on the design of communicative

57

language programme and text books designing in English. Then the scope of communicative language teaching expanded to all around the world.

Communicative Language Teaching: As language teaching, the communicative language means different things for different people. According to **Swain and Canal** 'communication is understood as the exchange and negotiation of information between at least two individual through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, oral and written and production and comprehension processes" (Brumfit, **The communicative approach to language Teaching**, 252)[5]. **Little wood** says "One of the most characteristic features of communicative language is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language" (Brumfit, 255)[6]. The syllabus for communicative method is based on communicative functions which the form of the language serves. The basic conceptions of the communicative languages teaching are.

- Language is a system for the expression of meaning
- The Primary function of language in interaction and communication
- The structure of language reflects its functional and communication uses.

The Distinctive features of the communicative approach are:

According to Brumfit the following are the distinctive features of the communicative method.

- Speech is given primary importance and the system of memorization is omitted completely in the process of language learning.
- Language learning is a learning to communicate and effective communication is emphasized in the process of communicative teaching.
- Reading and writing can start from the first day itself.
- Communicative competence is a desired goal.
- Systematic planning of content, function and meaning maintains interest.
- Language is created by the individual after thorough trial and error method.
- Fluency and acceptance of the language is the primary goal. Accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in the context.
- Motivation is given importance in language teaching and intrinsic motivation will spring form an interest in what is being communicated by the language.
- Language is taught with incidents and in real life like situation.
- Communication is judged on the basis of actual outcome of the learners.

In communicative language teaching, the teacher's role is very important. He organizes the activities, the activities must fulfill teaching principles such as learnability and teachalbility. He must select appropriate lessons, materials and drills for appropriate students. As a language instructor he must constantly motivate and encourage the learner. The student must enjoy their freedom in their learning activities.

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