

English Language Learning and Teaching through Approaches

N. Sagar*, B. Pavan Kumar, P. Vijay Kumar

Training & Placement cell, SRKR Engineering College (Autonomous) Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh, India.

*Corresponding author: E-Mail: sagarn@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

English is part of our life as it occupies the paramount position in educational, industrial, social and cultural life. It is the language of science and technology and the language of library. As English is a world language, every student should learn English and must have command over it. There are different approaches to learn English language. English teacher has to use each and every approach according to the needs of the situation to make the student proficient in English. The teacher has to know and follow the latest approaches in his language teaching. Communicative approach, Task-based approach, Eclectic approach, Holistic approach etc. are recent and useful approaches. This paper aims at analyze various approaches, how the teacher can make the student good at English through various approaches and shows how these are helpful to students to learn and strengthen English language.

KEY WORDS: Importance of English, Methods, Approaches, English teacher, Practice.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a difference between approach and method. An approach is a theory about language learning and deals with nature of language teaching and learning. It is set of assumptions where as a method determines what and how much is taught. It gives a detail plan for presentation of the language material. Thus approach deals with assumptions and method is a procedure based on these assumptions. In this way, with in approach, there can be many methods. Methods include various procedures and techniques. Procedure is a step by step process to execute method whereas technique is an activity which comes from procedure. English teacher can develop his own technique to teach English.

The English teacher should train the students in the following skills through various approaches to make the students proficient in English.

- Students should be able to speak English fluently
- They should be able to speak without any grammatical mistakes
- They should be able to develop spontaneous speaking skills.
- They should be able to read and write English

Listening plays a key role in learning any language. So the teacher has to create English atmosphere and provide multiple opportunities to the students to listen English. For this the teacher can follow various methods and approaches in his language teaching. The ultimate aim of listening skill is to understand and respond to other's speaking

The second aim of language teaching is speaking English freely, clearly, fluently, accurately. So if the teacher involves students in various speaking activities, they can improve their spoken skill. Teaching English through various approaches makes the student skillful and proficient in English language.

Reading skill is another important area in which students should be trained to read, understand, and analyze the text and able to answer the questions. For this, they must be good at skimming, scanning, silent reading, loud reading, extensive reading, intensive reading etc.

Writing skill is the most useful aspect in English language learning. The aim here is enable the students to write letters, E-mails, simple topics, essays etc. they should be able to write personal and professional letters, complaints, applications, simple notes, invitations etc.

So teacher plays a significant role in improving students' language skills inside the class room. English teacher can meet these four objectives of language teaching by following various approaches.

So it is a challenge to teacher to make them good at accuracy, fluency and spontaneous speaking skills. It is easy to the teacher if he knows various approaches and how to use these approaches in the class room. Structural approach, communicative approach, task-based approach, Eclectic approach, Holistic approach are useful and helpful to develop above skills. Let us know in detail of different approaches.

Structural Approach: The different arrangements or patterns of words are called structures. For E.g.

I enjoy reading books.

I do not enjoy reading books

Do you enjoy reading books?

When will you read books?

In the above statements, the vocabulary is same. But the meaning of each sentence is different because of the different ways of arrangement of words. Speaking English with grammar mistakes will not be effective and impressive. Through the structural approach, the teacher can make the students good at grammar. Most of the Committees and experts recommended that the students should be taught 250 basic structures and 2500 basic

vocabulary to get command over English. The English teacher must teach selected structures and vocabulary which are useful in framing sentences. In a competitive exams like essay writing, paragraph writing, picture description, one should use a variety structures and avoid monotony in structures like using only subject+verb+ object only. Teacher has to teach these selected structures with meaningful situation. Structural approach gives importance to speech rather than reading and writing. Students will be active in teaching-learning process. Students practice speaking English language by drilling method and get command over vocabulary.

Tamilnadu in India is the first state used this approach with the help of England government which helped in designing, and preparing material of structural approach. Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala are following this approach in English. The structural approach occupied a prominent position in earlier twentieth century. The teacher has to follow selected structures from easy to difficult, known to unknown etc. He has to teach frequent use of structures along with valuable structures.

Situational Approach: Teaching structures or vocabulary by creating situations is called situational approach. A meaningful presentation of language will facilitate the students to learn language effectively. He has to create situations by using real objects in the classroom. For e.g:

The class room is decorated with quotations.

It does not have black board.

It has white board.

Can you give directions from this classroom to English lab? etc.

He may ask to frame sentences from their experience in life

E.g.: What are your daily routines?

What did you do yesterday since morning to evening?

What is the action plan to achieve your goal? Etc.

The teacher can create real and actual objects in the class room like furniture, charts, black board etc for the presentation and practice of structures. Teacher can't teach every structure through real objects and experience. In such cases, he has to create artificial situation or showing pictures, models, charts to follow situational approach. Situations can be real or imaginary. They can improve English language through imaginary situations and present their imaginary ideas through structures. The ultimate object is to train the students to speak English language. So teacher must have a lot of planning to involve the students in speaking English. Learning target language in situational approach is habit formation. Students will develop spontaneous speaking skill if the teacher create spontaneous situation and ask the students to speak on it. They learn vocabulary in cultural and linguistic context.

Substitution Approach: According to palmer, substitution is a process by any model sentence may be multiplied indefinitely by substituting for anyone its words or word groups. Teacher gives a sentence and explains the sentence. Then he asks the students to frame another sentence by substituting the words. For this, initially the students have to understand the structure of the sentence pattern and the position of the word.

E.g.

He	generally	Walks fast
His mother		reads newspaper at 6'clock
She		works hard

Students take the common word generally substitute the subject and verb. If they substitute a word 'they' in the column of subject, the sentence will be grammatically wrong. So substitute approach helps students to develop their speaking and writing skills.

E.g.

They	have been	Playing cricket	Since	10'clock
He	has been	Reading book	For	2 hours
She				

The following are the principles of substitution approach.

- It gives importance to speech by practicing substituting sentences
- It is student centered activity
- Students will be master over structures and sentence pattern
- Students do not confuse as teacher teaches one item at a time
- They get command over accuracy
- In this approach, the unit of teaching is a sentence pattern

Communicative Approach: The communicative approach had its origin in England and in the United States. It is used in Japan and China. It is improvement of structural approach with a special emphasis on the communicative ability. The primary principle of this approach is learning English through use. The teacher has to conduct various activities like debate, Just a Minute, Role-Play, seminars, Group Discussions etc. he has to ask the students to narrate

a story or describe incident or picture or involve them to speak on current affairs to improve their communication skills. The structural approach makes the learner good at grammar whereas communicative approach makes the learner good at communication. Communicative approach is student-centered approach, teacher has to move friendly with students and act as motivator, facilitator, and guide. Communicative approach emphasizes meaning rather than word. Students learn language in friendly atmosphere and they learn second language through unconscious process as they involve in various speaking activities. It has some features they are: students use language productively and receptively in the classroom. Fluency is possible through this method. It gives importance to use or function of the language. It provides opportunities for real life situation or real communication and avoids drills.

Some of the students are good at grammar and they are able to understand what others speak. But they cannot speak fluently. In this case, communicative approach is suitable to such type of students. Most of graduates are getting degrees without communication skills as they are not participating different speaking activities during their study. Teacher can make the students involve in communicative language teaching activities like role-play, pair work, group discussion etc. They can avoid shyness and stage fear by participating in various activities. One can get master over English language by practicing speaking English. Communicative approach gives much scope for practicing speaking English.

Task-Based Approach: It is also known as Task Based Instruction (TBI) or Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT). In this approach, the task is activity in which students use language to achieve specific result. The teacher may give certain problem to the students and ask to solve it. For e.g. He may conduct mock interview or conversation between bank manager and customer or visiting a doctor or describing a video or he may ask the students to speak about current affair topics like can technology replace a teacher? For this, he has to give a brief introduction about it and then students recall words, phrases used by teacher. Students will form as small groups to discuss the topic and present their ideas. The English teacher has to give constructive feedback on their language and teacher has to ask the students write summarization of the discussion in 100 or 150 words. He has to ask the students to read few articles whatever they have written. The teacher has to give current affair topics like can India free from black money, what are the various ways to eradicate corruption, terrorism, etc. He has to cover International, national, social, political, cultural, academic, controversial topics, educational, sports, business, technical, environmental etc. If students speak on these topics, they can improve their communication skills and knowledge of the subject. There is a difference between communicative approach and task-based approach. In communicative approach students will develop spoken skills where as in task-based approach, teacher integrates all four basic skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teacher has to encourage speaking spontaneously through tasks and problem solving and ask the students to write summary of listening.

Cognitive Approach: According to the cognitive approach, language learning is a psycholinguistic process. It is a mental activity in which language learning will be based on thinking, remembering. It is based on the principle of multiple intelligence. Students learn language through innate knowledge rather than habit process. It gives importance to practice rather than rules of grammar. They may speak language with grammatical mistakes later they know the rules. The teacher has to guide them and give sentences of common errors to rectify their error in speaking. They possess in born capacity which permits learners to acquire language in natural process. They learn language without drills and repetitions. It does not believe the principle of stimulus-response theory. The recognition and productive use of patterns will always be an important part of language learning. Teachers should adopt cognitive approach through the exercises to make practice meaningful.

Students will learn different structures in structural approach and practice it by substitute words in substitution approach. According to cognitive approach, students are able to understand difference between various structures, substitution and transformation drills like simple to complex sentence, complex to compound sentence etc. so all this process depends on mental ability. Cognitive approach emphasizes the importance of meaningful practice and the structures were presented inductively. It means rules will be taught after the examples. Cognitive theories view language learning is a process of recognition. Memory is an important part of this approach. If students memorize and think various structures, they can frame various sentences. It leads to efficient communication.

Holistic Approach: Language learning should be as a whole in holistic approach. It integrates language skills and it is student centered approach. Generally some of the students good at communication skills but they may be poor in other skills. Holistic approach covers four basic skills. Graduate and undergraduate courses are giving importance to syllabus which is based on holistic approach.

For e.g. If the two students read a passage, other students understand the theme of the passage and answer the questions. It covers listening, speaking, reading skills. Some of the activities will be based on vocabulary. Cross words, puzzles, language games, jumble words and sentences are helpful to develop vocabulary. In the same way grammar activities covers examples, rules. Teacher has to ask students to frame a sentence with using correct grammar and some of the activities may cover writing skills like letter writing, paragraph writing, essay writing, pamphlet writing etc. So the syllabus which based on holistic approach covers all English language elements. The English teacher has to cover all aspects as a whole not as individual activity. Holistic language learning (HLL) is

connected all language elements and language will be taught as a whole. It also sees language as a vehicle for internal interaction. The following are the principles of Holistic approach.

- Language use always occurs in situation
- Language acquisition occurs through actual use
- Language acquisition is a whole process
- It focuses on meaning and authentic activities with real results
- It focuses on social collaborative social interaction.

Learner plays an important role in holistic approach. He should be flexible and able to employ language in different contexts. The English teacher should be competent to handle holistic approach and good command over language. He should guide students and encourage participating in multiple activities. So he should be flexible and friendly. For example teacher may ask the students to read a paragraph. Before that, he has to read a paragraph loudly. When he reads students observe his pronunciation of words, pause, stress, and intonation. Then he has to ask one or two students to read a passage loudly then he asks the students to follow silent reading to answer the questions. In this process, he explains the meaning of complex words, phrases and gives number of examples to explain vocabulary. Then teacher has to ask the students to tell similar examples and encourage speak on topic or theme of the paragraph. Otherwise he has to conduct discussion on the topic. For example if the paragraph relates about social media, they speak whether social media is boon or bane. If the teacher is competent, he can draw the skill of students by involving them in multiple activities. In this process, he can cover all skills like listening, speaking, reading, presentation skills and vocabulary.

Eclectic Approach: Larsen-Freeman and Mellow used the term Eclectic approach to language teaching. According to this approach, language learning is a combined process of structural and communicative activities. It combines various methods and approaches to teach English language depending on the aims and objectives of particular lesson. The aims and objectives will be different from one lesson to another lesson. When the teacher teaches grammar, he has to follow inductive method, if the topic belongs to structures; he has to follow structural and situational approach. If the topic belongs to spoken, he has to follow communicative or task-based approach. It is a mixture of traditional and modern approaches. Teacher can handle this approach easily in the class room. Eclectic approach offers better opportunities to students to learn language skills. It gives good result without pressure on learner. The use of this approach is learners have clear idea what they are learning. Lively learning and multiple tasks are salient features of this method. It balances both accuracy and fluency.

2. CONCLUSION

English became part and parcel in everyone's life. Today students are tomorrow citizens. So Teacher plays an important role in improving student's skills. English teacher feel responsible in improving and strengthening language skills and proficiency in students. So he has to follow effective teaching methods in the class room. Effective teaching English includes several factors such as teachers' level of the knowledge, his presentation skills, motivation and his teaching methods. So the English teacher has to follow appropriate approach according to level and knowledge of the students. Generally students follow what teacher says. So it is the responsibility of the English teacher to explore new approaches. Exploration and knowing latest approaches is not enough. He has to follow approaches according to situation to make his teaching effective and to improve student's language skills.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our sincere thanks to our college management, our principal, Dr. G.P.Saradhi Varma, and our Head of the Department Dr.K. Suresh babu for their help and support

REFERENCES

- Barbara Davis G, Tools for Teaching, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, second edition, 2009, 461-471.
- Chamot A.U & O'Malley J.M, Implementing the cognitive Academic language learning approach, The Bilingual Research Journal, 1996, 167-172.
- Cohen A.D & Scott K, Synthesis of approaches to assessing language learning strategies, Prentice Hall International, 1996, 89-100
- Ellis Task R, Based language learning and Teaching, Oxford University press, 2003, 243-248.
- Green J, Oxford. R.L, A closer look at learning strategies, L2 proficiency, and gen der. TESOL, Quarterly, 29, 1995, 261-297.
- Nunan D, Does learner strategy training makes a difference? Lenguas Modernas, 1997, 123-142.
- Nunan D, Language teaching Methodology, London, Prentice Hall, 1991, 90-95.
- Oxford R.L, Language learning strategies, Oxford University press, 1990, 140-144.