



OPERATIVE WAYS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AT THE BEGINNING STAGE

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses specific popular and efficient ways of teaching the English language, which fulfills the demand of modern learners. Most of the time, it is a foreign language that the learner can't pick up from his/her surroundings, and teachers should teach patiently and systematically so that the pupils become confident and can read, write and speak the language effortlessly. The English language is the language of the world, and English teachers have changed their methods of delivery over the years to suit the present scenario. Teachers have used different methods, approaches, and styles to suit the child's requirements. Teaching English as a second language is a challenge as we can see that for non-native speakers, various methods need to be devised.

Keywords: methods, books, difficulty, cause, effort, effective media, teaching English

Introduction

Teaching English to young learners or novices is always a challenge. Especially English as a foreign language is taught to groups who are either monolingual or may be multi-lingual but not native speakers. We need to be more careful and need to keep in mind a few things when teaching English to beginners.

Language teaching has undergone a lot of changes. It has shifted to role-plays, interactive games, short visuals, etc. from the traditional ways, such as lectures by facilitators with only a blackboard to support and spell repetition and grammar worksheets, have shifted to role-plays.

Natural method. This method of teaching English, also known as the direct method, seems to be a response to the Grammar translation technique. In this process, the teacher who is aiming to teach English as a second language, asks the learner to think in English so that they can communicate in English. The technique aims at building a connection between thought and expression. It required the teacher to strictly prohibit



the student from using his/her native language. The learner is supposed to perfectly express himself/herself in English, with proper accent and usage of grammatical skills. This method of teaching English is used in modern times and is useful in teaching to communicate in English. As the student thinks and talks in English in real-life situations, they learn the language accurately, and there is no rote learning or translation. This might take some time, but whatever is learned has a long term effect on our memory.

Audio Lingual. This method of teaching English was initially called ‘the Army Method,’ as it was devised during the second world war when it became necessary for soldiers to learn the language of their opponents. It resembles a direct method in a way. This approach is based on thinking in the language and expressing thoughts in the same. And in the process, learning happens. The Teaching process is based on Skinner’s theory of behaviorism and his representative experiment of operant conditioning. According to which a positive reinforcement helps in learning new things. In this approach, the student is supposed to learn the language’s structure and everyday usage rather than emphasize understanding the words. Patterns of commonplace discussions are taught, and the learners repeat it, followed by testing. This process is carried on until the student answers correctly. The process of the audio-lingual method is characterized by conventional drilling of set phrases which are used in daily communication, and grammatical rules are not emphasized upon, the vocabulary taught is contextual, the technique uses audiovisual aids. It focuses on pronunciation, and, lastly, any correct response is immediately reinforced positively. The method of teaching English is used until now and is suitable for learning to communicate properly in English or any other second language. Still, extensive relearning and memorization led to a lack of routine learning of English, which developed an obstacle in diverse communication.

Silent Way. This method of teaching English, also known as the Natural approach, is based on the idea of how human beings learn to speak their mother tongue. Caleb Gattegno devised this method of language teaching. According to him, the teacher should be silent as much as possible, but the students should be motivated to speak the language. The silent way method uses elements such as color charts and the colored Cuisenaire rods, etc. Certain principles on which this method is based are:

Learning happens when the learner learns to discover new things about the foreign language and is creative rather than repeating what is taught.



Learning is encouraged by physical objects in the surrounding.

It is based on problem-solving. This method of teaching English is perfect for beginners or young learners of English.

Total Physical Response. This method involves acting out language rather than speaking. It can be through mimicry or only responding to audiovisual cues. Games like ‘Simon says...’ or the charades are classic examples of this method of teaching.

This method is a fun way of learning language and therefore is very useful.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). This method applies to schools where most of the important subjects are taught in English. This is prevalent in modern classrooms. The focus is on the content, and the lessons are tailored to suit the student’s needs and preferences. CLIL is effective in teaching students the real-life application of the English language as a means of expressing culturally.

Communicative Language Teaching. This broad term is an accepted standard of teaching English in modern times. It does not focus on grammatical fluency. Instead, it emphasizes on communicating the meaning of the message; in other words, it focuses on how well a person (non-native speaker) can deliver in the English language.

The various characteristics of this method are:

1. Interaction in English language results in a proper understanding of the language.
2. Students are taught strategies to understand English.
3. The experiences of the students are focused on making up the content of the lessons.
4. Authentic text in English is used for teaching
5. **Principled Eclecticism:** This refers to the variety of teaching methods, depending on the aptitude of the learner. Different methods are put together to suit the requirement of the student.

Any single method has its strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, it may not be suitable for a specific learner, so the teacher in this approach uses a combination of techniques to make the language understandable. This is the most contemporary method of teaching a foreign language and is very useful.

Now we are going to look through specific basic approaches to teaching English in modern times.

1. **Task-Based Approach** – This approach focuses on competencies the students want to develop and is based on the idea, why is English taught? Rather than what is shown. So here, the language is learned by doing certain activities and relating English



to daily conversation. The tasks given range from ‘ordering in a restaurant’ to ‘reviewing a movie,’ and the grammar and vocabulary revolve around the job itself.

2. Project-Based Approach – as a teacher, you need to ask yourself why your students have come to learn English. Now keeping their requirements in mind, you need to devise a project which the learner works on. The project might be a role-play or a presentation.

3. Lexical Syllabus – In this approach, the teacher is supposed to develop the student’s vocabulary, which is specific to their needs. The word list, if found to be big, is categorized under different headings. For, e.g., the coronary syndrome is terms related to medicine, and so their word list will consist of these words.

4. Usage of Smartphones in the Classroom – Smartphones have become an inevitable part of our existence. It also provides many essential tools to students like a dictionary, reference apps, or grammar apps. The only thing is that we must guide students about how to use it.

Let’s study the following Tips for teaching a foreign language to beginners.

1. Keep your instructions clear and straightforward – Always remember while giving instructions to your new batch of students, that it should be simple and broken down into short sentences, it need not be too formal or courteous. If you want to sound polite, simple words such as ‘Please’ and ‘Thank You’ will do, because the learners in the early stage will know only a few words of English and too formal language will be overwhelming.

2. Encourage the novices to listen and then speak. You should motivate the students to listen to the pronunciations, pay attention to the grammar, and develop a vocabulary before they start speaking English. However, you will find many of the learners try to begin speaking in the language as soon as the classes commence. But there will be few who would wait. You should smartly plan your lessons so that the beginners are equipped with sufficient English knowledge and can communicate soon.

3. Drilling and repetition – The students need a lot of repetition and drilling to learn sentences carefully. It may seem monotonous but is an efficient method of teaching. Say the sentence, break it down, go back and forth and repeat it till the new learner understands it and learns it.

4. Avoid metalanguage – Do not use terminologies as the new learners do not know how to use them while communicating. E.g., irregular verbs, the learners are not sure about these or their usage. So it is better to use visual cues for better comprehension.



Try to find out how much they have understood by asking relevant questions or asking them to explain again. Do not ask the question, ‘Do you understand?’. The learners, when asked this question, maybe reluctant to reply correctly or may even believe that they have understood everything.

5. Keep in mind that the students are fluent in their language – Do not forget that your students, while speaking broken English, will try to think in their language and translate it into English while speaking. Point this out to them, try to teach them to maintain a flow and rhythm, and deal patiently.

6. Do your homework correctly – When starting a new class prepare well with the topic and keep many related activities ready. Plan out clearly how you will introduce the topic, break the ice, and make your students express.

Think of the probable challenges you may face and keep a solution ready. This makes teaching effective and learning fun for new learners.

Teachers are the torch bearers of a civilized society. For ages, teachers have used different methods, approaches, and styles to suit the child’s requirements. Teaching English as a second language is a challenge as we can see that for non-native speakers, various methods need to be devised. In India, English teaching is an exciting task, as we are multi-lingual and have a diverse socio-economic background. Still, general thinking identifies the English language as a mark of being literate. So teachers of this century put together all the methods to find the best one for our country. Although too much use of visual aids and gamification of education are still not widespread in our country.

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