

Methods and Approaches to English Language Teaching

Dr. Akkabattula Chiranjeevi Rao¹,

Punayya Yentrapati², Dylapalli Vara Prasad Babu³

¹*Asst.Prof of English, WISTM Engg College, Pinagadi(V), Pendurthy (M), Visakhapatnam*

²*Asst.Prof., Sasi Institute of Technology and Engineering, Tadepalligudem*

³*A.P.T.W.R.School, Buttaigudam(G), West Godavari District*

ABSTRACT

To teach English as a foreign language there are some methods and approaches are to be followed by every English teacher to enable his/her students equip some command on English spoken and written language. The full paper is to be elaborated on the following specific Areas.

Mainly there are two well known approaches which are

1. Structural approach
2. Situational approach

Meaning of structural approach - method of structural approach - types of structures - selection of structures - content words - creating situation to teach structures - procedure of teaching - principles of structural approach - aims of structural approach - merits of structural approach - demerits of structural approach.

Situational approach meaning - main characteristics of situational approach - procedure of the approach - precautions - merits of situational approach - demerits of situational approach.

I INTRODUCTION

Structural Approach: This approach is a direct outcome of the research done by British Council in Institute of Education, University of London. The basis of this approach is that in learning a foreign language mastery of structures is more important than the acquisition of vocabulary. Structural approach means the arrangement of words in such a way as to form a suitable pattern of sentence.. Structural approach is based on the belief that in the leaning of a foreign language, mastery of structures is more important that the acquisition of vocabulary. This approach is also known as new approach or 'Aural-oral Approach'. In India, Tamil Nadu was first state to have this approach in vogue. Afterwards Central Institute of English, Hyderabad played a leading role to popularize this approach in the rest of the country.

Meaning of Structural Approach:

According to Brewington 'Structural approach is a scientific study of the fundamental structures of the English Language, their analysis and logical arrangement'. In the words of Menon and Patel the structural approach is

based on the belief that in the learning of a foreign language, mastery of structure is more important than the acquisition of vocabulary. The structural approach to English is teaching the learner certain selected structures in a certain order' opines Bhandari.

The different arrangements or patterns of words are called structures. Structures may be complete patterns or they may form a part of a large pattern. Structures are tools of a language. We must not confuse them with sentences. Structures do not need any grammatical background where as sentences are grammatical order of words.

Types of structures:

In the structural approach there are four kinds of structures namely sentenced patterns, phrase patterns, formulas and idioms.

1. Sentence patterns: French defined the word pattern means a model from which many things of the same kind and shape can be made like houses which look the same or shoes made alike or a number of lorries 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.
2. For example: there are three exercises books on the table.
3. 2. Phrase patterns: Phrase is a word or a group of words which express an idea without its begin sentenced of clause e.gh.in the school, on the desk, with a knife, into the basket etc.
4. Formulas: Formulas are those words which are used on certain occasions e.g. How are you? Good Morning; Thank you; etc..
5. Idioms: Idioms are like 'born with a silver spoon, ' to err is human, forgive is divine, at the eleventh hour' etc. come in this category. These should be taught as a whole.

Selection of Structures

While making a selection of structures those structures, which have the following characteristics, must be selected:

1. Useful: those structures, which frequently occur in both written and spoken language, are useful.
2. Simple: For beginners only simple structures must be selected. E.g. I am walking, you are sleeping etc...
3. Teachable: The teachable structures should be taught in the beginning e.g. I am standing can be taught more easily than I am thinking. Structures should be up to the level of the learner's age.
4. Structures should be up to the level of the learner's capacity to learn.

Gradation or structures:

The gradation of structures can be done as follows;

1. Structures which identify things and persons.
2. Structures which locate them in space.
3. Structures which fix them in time.

Content words:

In addition to structures in structural approach, content words are also taught because without content words the teaching will be dull and uninspiring. Those content words are only used which spring from particular situations.

For example, 'duster'. The duster is the content word because the teacher can hold it in his hand and show it to the students.

Creating situation to teach structures;

According to Bhandari an appropriate situation should be created;

1. To practice the structure and to relate it to its meaning
2. To build up a vocabulary of content words
3. If the teacher aims at teaching this students the word 'into' he should put a basket before the pupils and by putting an apple into it, should say. ' I am putting an apple into the basket.' With the help of this, teacher should
 - a. Make students practice the structure 'into' and relate it to its meaning.
 - b. Build up a vocabulary.

The situation can be created by;

- a. Gestures
- b. Pictures
- c. Drawing on the blackboard.

Procedure of Teaching;

In structural approach every structure is taught separately. Generally the following five steps are involved;

- a. Presentation of item in appropriate situation by the teacher.
- b. Oral drill by the students of the situations created by step(a)
- c. Presentation of item in some new situation.
- d. Oral drill by the students of situations created by step©
- e. Over all drill

Principles of Structural Approach:

The three principles of structural approach as stated by F.G French are

1. Importance of child's activity rather than the activity of the teacher
2. Importance of speech for firmly fixing word.
3. Importance of the formation of language habit to arrange words in suitable English sentence-patterns in order to replace the sentence-patterns of child's mother tongue.

Aims of Structural approach:

The following are the aims of structural approach;

1. To lay the foundation of English by establishing through drill and repetition of about 275 graded structures.
2. To enable the children to attain mastery over an essential vocabulary of about 3000 root word for active use.
3. To correlate the teaching of grammar and composition with the reading lessons.
4. To teach the four fundamental skills names understanding, speaking, reading and writing.
5. To lay proper emphasis on the aural-oral approach, active methods and the condemnation of formal grammar.

Merits of structural approach:

1. It puts more emphasis on speech or oral aspect of learning. The students practiced the structure through a number of oral drills. If students are taught properly they acquire good pronunciation and fluency through speech.
2. It can be adopted for all stages of education
3. It creates appropriate environment for learning the language.
4. It stresses habit formation, through intensive drills; the students cultivate the habit of speaking the English language.
5. It is based on scientific principles.
6. It makes both teacher and students active which is psychologically sound.

Demerits of structural approach:

1. Like direct method, structural approach is most suitable only for lower classes.
2. It overlooks the linguistic habits already formed while learning the mother tongue.
3. It is possible to teach only well-selected sentences patterns with the help of this approach.
4. Too much mechanical drilling is emphasized. It makes the class dull and uninteresting.
5. It cannot be used successfully in over-crowded classes.
6. A number of teaching aids are needed for teaching by this approach.
7. According to Prof.R.N.Ghosh, this approach over emphasizes;
 - a. Oral presentation
 - b. Teaching of structural items
 - c. Monolingual presentation

- d. Mechanical drilling, and
- e. Rigid sequencing of structures resulting in the production of uninteresting reading materials.

Precautions:

To get better results from teaching by this approach following precautions must be observed.

1. The structures should be graded, arranged and illustrated on the basis of linguistic research findings.
2. The teacher should not play the role of a structuralist all the time. He should remain a teacher most of the time.
3. Other methods should also be used along with this approach.
4. Too many new content words should not be introduced in teaching one structure.

It has been observed that structural approach has made the teaching of English definite. It has fully integrated the teaching of grammar and composition with the material.

Situational Approach:

In this approach English is basically taught in the same way in which the child learns his own mother tongue. Some of the important points of learning the mother-tongue are as follows;

1. Every item of mother tongue is learnt in a real situation.
2. Whatever the child understands and expresses is connected with his own life.
3. The situations in which the child learns the mother tongue are repeated again and again.

Main characteristics of Situational Approach:

1. The new word is incidentally introduced in the class by the teacher.
2. Teacher offers many opportunities to the students to associate the meaning of new words with corresponding situations.
3. Appropriate materials are used to create proper situations.
4. Constant repetition is stressed.

Procedure of the approach:

1. For presenting of new vocabulary and syntax teacher can make use of objects available in the classroom. E.g.

‘That is black board’

It is table

I am standing near the table.

It is a chair.

I am sitting in the chair.

2. The teacher can use the classroom object for presenting opportunities to recognize affirmative, negative, and interrogative forms of speech e.g...
3. Teacher may ask,
4. What is this? (Interrogative), Is this a table? (affirmative), What is this? Are you pointing to the blackboard?
5. Repetition of the sentences
6. Using imperative
7. Putting questions to the class

Precautions:

According to A.S Hornsby, a teacher teaching by situational approach should keep the following points in mind.

1. All new words must be presented clearly to the class in situations that make their meaning clear.
2. The amount of new material in each period should be limited to what can be assimilated by the students.
3. The pupils must hear numerous repetitions before being called upon to produce.
4. When pupils are called upon to produce, they must engage themselves in those activities about which they are speaking.
5. Action chains and long sequences must be preferred than isolated actions.
6. Revision must be undertaken constantly.
7. About 66% time of the period must be reserved for pronunciation, drill, reading, spelling, writing etc.

Merits of situational approach:

1. It follows the principle of interest.
2. Action-chain makes the class lively
3. It follows the principle of variety and simplicity
4. It lays emphasis on learning by play.
5. It lays stress on learning through hearing
6. It makes use of teaching aids.

Demerits of situational approach:

1. This approach can be used to teach only well selected words and sentence-patterns.
2. It suits for teaching only lower classes.
3. Due to over drill the class becomes monotonous.
4. It is not possible to teach textbooks by following this approach.
5. We need trained teachers to teach by this approach.