



THE ORAL APPROACH UNDERLYING SITUATIONAL LANGUAGE TEACHING: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT:

Language is way of communication by means of which social transaction is accomplished perfectly. Language in the field of education, training, religion and government has been changing in the western world with the result of political and economic changes in Europe. Before English Latin, French and Italian languages gained its importance in the European world. Therefore, teaching foreign languages has always been an important practical interest.. The foundations of methods based on approaches to language teaching and learning were developed during the early part of the twentieth century to make the process effective. In this analysis, the different dimensions of the Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching method, which can be characterized as a type of British "Structuralism" are discussed.

Index Terms - Oral Approach, Situational Language Teaching, Learning, Method

INTRODUCTION:

The oral approach is an approach to methodology that includes systematic principles of selection (procedures by which lexical and grammatical content are chosen), gradation (principles by which organization and grammatical content are determined) and presentation (techniques used for presentation and practice). items. A direct method which, although oral, lacked a systematic method in linguistic theory and practice. This approach is completely based on a scientific way and its primary goal is to have a systematic way of teaching English.

"The oral approach should not be confused with the outdated direct method, which only meant that the learner was confused by a stream of unclassified speech, suffered all the difficulties he would have encountered in acquiring the language in his normal environment, and lost most of the compensating advantage of better contextualization under those circumstances"

(Pattison 1964: 4)

DISCUSSION:

The origins of the oral approach began with the work of British applied linguists in the 1920s and 1930s. During the early part of the twentieth century, leading British linguists developed a foundation in approach and method to language teaching, particularly in the 1930s and 1960s. In the 1950s, this was the accepted British approach to teaching the English language.. It had become a long lasting impact in language teaching and its principles have shaped its design in many standard methodology text books .Harold Palmer (1877-1949) and A.S. Hornby (1898 -1978) were the most prominent figures of this approach . They tried to develop a more scientific method for the oral approach than the direct method. The result was a systematic study of principles and procedures that could be applied in the selection and organization of language course content.

(Palmer 1917, 1921)

One of the greatest language teaching specialists Palmer came into decision that vocabulary was the first of all crucial aspects of foreign language learning. A second influence is the emphasis on reading skill as the goal of foreign language learning. In a word, vocabulary is deemed to be a way for developing reading skills in this approach. Vocabulary is seen as inevitable component of reading proficiency. The oral approach stipulates a core of 2000 or so words essential for foreign language reading. Palmer emphasized that language teaching develops learning practices suitable for teaching basic grammatical patterns through an oral approach. According to Palmer, grammar is the underlying sentence patterns of the spoken language. In view of grammar it is different from the Grammar-Translation Method, which is based on universal logic. In the oral approach the linguists classified grammatical structures into sentence patterns such as subject-verb-object in order to use and understand the language.

PPP lesson model is another aspect of this approach. PPP stands for presentation, practice and production. Presentation is the introduction of a new teaching item in context by the teacher to the students. In presentation phase the teacher uses text, audio or visual aids to present the grammar. Practice means controlled practice of the item by the students so that they can present their understanding without fear. In practice phase the learner utters the structure correctly using such activities as drills , gap-fill, multiple-choice questions etc. Production means a freer practice phase . In production phase , the learners transfer the structure or knowledge to freer communication through dialogues and other activities.

The main characteristics of this approach are :

1. Language teaching begins with the spoken language before being presented in written form.
2. Second Language is the language of the classroom.
3. New language is introduced and practiced situationally.
4. Vocabulary selection procedures are followed to ensure that basic general vocabulary is covered.
5. Grammar items are classified according to the principle that simple forms should be taught before complex ones.

Situational language teaching follows the theory of the oral approach. It is a type of oral approach. The only difference is a period of time. The oral approach was flourished in the 1920's and Situational language teaching method was developed in the 1960's.

The oral approach, which is the basis of situational language teaching, is a type of behaviorist theory of habitual learning. Students learned through practice and teaching takes place inductively. Here the students give little control over content and follow and repeat what the instructor says. Though it is a reaction to the Direct Method, situational language teaching adopts an inductive approach to the teaching of grammar like the Direct Method. The meaning of words or structures is not to be given by explanations in either the mother tongue or the target language, but is to be derived from the way the form is used in the situation. The learner applies the language learned in the classroom to situation outside the classroom. Thus the language learning process takes place and the same process is thought to take place in second and foreign language learning.

The objectives of the oral approach underlying situational language teaching method are:

- 1.To command over the four basic skills of language.
- 2.To achieve or approach skills through structure.
- 3.To give emphasis on accuracy in both pronunciation and grammar.
- 4.To achieve reading and writing skills preceded by speech work.

The syllabus under the oral approach and situational language teaching method is a structural syllabus (a list of the basic structures and pattern) and a list of words arranged according to situations. It is not a situational syllabus in the sense that this term is sometimes used , rather situation refers to the manner of presenting and practicing sentence patterns. Let us have an example conceived from Frisby (1957):

Lesson	Sentence Pattern	Vocabulary
First Lesson	I am thirsty.	Hungry, poor, greedy
Second Lesson	He is slow.	Prompt , lazy , clever .
Third Lesson	You are mad.	Crazy , brave , dull .
Fourth Lesson	Am I bold? Yes, I am.	Weak , old ,timid.
Fifth Lesson	Is he busy? No, he is not.	Lazy , sick , rich .

The learner's role is simply-

- i) Listen and repeat what the teacher says and answer questions and commands given by the teacher.
- ii)To take more active participation.
- iii) To do practice of new language, repetitions, drills, pair practice and group works.

The teacher's role is threefold –setting up situation for a new structure, introducing the new structure for students and finally drilling and correction.

The teacher has to be highly responsible for the followings-

- i)The teacher has to be well known about prescribed textbooks.
- ii)The teacher serves as a demonstrator through different teaching aids like posters ,pictures , wall charts ,flashcards etc.
- iii)Since the lessons are teacher directed , he sets the pace and skillfully manipulates the situation to elicit correct sentences from the learners using questions, commands etc.
- iv)During drilling the teacher checks the pronunciation ,grammatical and structural errors.

Pittman (1963) illustrates oral drilling on a pattern , using a box full of objects to create the situation . The pattern being practiced is-

"There is a noun +of+ (noun) in the box." The teacher takes the objects out of the box and the class repeats:

There is a jar of rice in the box.

There is a bottle of ink in the box.

There is a packet of pen the box.

There is a reel of thread in the box.

There is a packet of nails in the box.

There is a packet of matches the box.

There is a pair of slippers in the box.

CONCLUSION:

Many methods were passed throughout the ages as per the need of the time. Each new English language teaching method found better than its earlier. The oral approach and situational language teaching (1920s – 1960s) are not the exception in the case. They succumb to communicative language teaching approach for the time being. Chomsky (1957) in syntactic structure has criticized the method by saying that it is incapable of accounting creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences, which is a fundamental characteristic of a language.

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