

An Overview of Cognitive Approach in Language Learning

Cognitive Theory in Language Learning

Cognitive theory in language learning is in accordance with two modern theories : cognitive linguistics theory and cognitive psychology theory. Cognitive linguistics theory describes how language interacts with cognition, how language forms our thoughts and the evolution of language parallel with the change in the common mindset across time. (Robinson& Peter, 2008) It was first proposed by Gerge Lakoff in 1987 in “Women, Fire, and Dangerous Thing.” Later, other scholars began developing their own approach to language description and linguistic theory. (Wallace Chafe, 1987; Charles Fillmore 2006) The most influential view shared by all the linguists is meaning should be a primary focus of study. Cognitive psychology theory is the scientific study of the mind as an information processor. It received great popularity in the mid-1950s, shifting from the study of conditioned behavior to the understanding of human information processing. Norbert Wiener (1984) introduced terms such as input and output. Newell and Simon(1972) developed the General Problem Solver. Aikinson and Shiffrin (1968) proposed multistore model which shows the process of memory. Cognitive psychology is the core theory of cognitive approach.

Cognitive Method in Language Learning

Method refers to more specific way of learning than approach. From the view of cognitive method, learning strategy (students) and teaching method (teacher) should be centered around student’ mental process rather than the external behavior and it is teachers’ role in guiding individual to focus on their internal learning process and learning style should be noted. Cognitive strategies include repetition, organizing new language, summarizing meaning, guessing meaning from context, using imagery for memorization, all of these strategies involve delivering manipulation of language to improve learning. Teaching method encompasses content enhancement, content evaluation, determination of necessary approaches and routines and instructional supports. (Bulgren & Scalon,1997) Content-based method and student-led seminar are two favored ways in cognitive language learning class.

Cognitive Technique in Language Learning

Cognitive Activities

Technique reflects activities or tools used by teachers. In cognitive language learning, activities used should focus on the effects in developing students' thinking ability and problem-solving ability. The goal is to get them thinking and applying problem-solving strategies without the use of preparation or steps that lead to an answer. Cognitive activities includes making mind maps, visualization, association, mnemonics, using clues in reading comprehension, underlining key words, scanning, self testing and monitoring and etc.

Cognitive Tools : Learning with Technology

Cognitive tools mean learning with technology. Jonassen (1994) stated that technologies as tools can provide learners with meaningful thinking, which correlates closely with cognitive view. Lajoie (1993, p.261) and Shim and Lee (2006) concluded that technology can benefit learners by supporting cognitive processes, sharing the cognitive load, allowing the learners to engage in cognitive activities that would be out of their reach and allowing learners to generate and test hypotheses in the context of problem solving. There are five classes of cognitive tools suggested by Jonassen and Carr (2000) : semantic organization tools, dynamic modeling tools, visualization tools, knowledge construction tools and socially shared cognitive tools. The five tools cover comprehensible aspects of language learning including semantics, grammar, social linguistics and etc, providing instructions for teachers' chose of technology tools in developing students' cognitive ability. Common cognitive tools are concept maps, knowledge forum, blogs and just to name a few.

The Strength of Cognitive Approach in Language Learning

Unlike the behavioral approach, cognitive approach aims to discover what might be the better way for the acquisition of language in our mind. It highlights how mental process greatly influences behavior and the disparity of learning effects.

This has positive significance for those who want to use the cognition to change their learning behavior for the better. Cognitive approach is, furthermore, a flexible theory which can be easily combined with other theories to make more positive results. For example, cognitive-behaviour therapy is a compound therapy, striving to create more favorable behavior by changing cognition. It is proved to be greatly useful in language learning.

The Limitation of Cognitive Approach in Language Learning

The first limitation of cognitive approach in language learning lies in its ignorance of emotional variables. For example, most cognitive tools such as database processor emphasize on the logical aspects of cognitive approach instead of emotional aspects. Language, as known to all, is more than merely communication tools and correlates closely with emotion, culture and society. The ignorance of emotional variables and subjective aspects, undoubtedly, have a negative impact on learners' use of language in reality. The second limitation of cognitive approach in language learning focuses on whether what we view the working procedure of our mind is true. Cognitive approach often relies on comparisons with how human mind might work. The method and tools we design and use is mainly based on the assumptions without enough evidence and the technology even the newest is unable to compare with the complex operating process of our mind. It is , therefore, difficult to confirm the effectiveness of cognitive approach.

THE HISTORY OF COGNITIVISM

Cognitivism as a theory of learning studies about the process occurs inside the learner's mind has the own history about how it happens or the development of it. The development of cognitivism theory is famous with the term "cognitive revolution". According to asiaeuniversity (2012:106) the cognitive revolution is the name for an intellectual movement in the 1950s that began with what are known collectively as the cognitive sciences. It began in the modern context of greater interdisciplinary communication and research. Although cognitive psychology emerged in the late 1950s and began to take over as the dominant

theory of learning. It wasn't until the late 1970s that cognitive science began to have its influence on instructional design (Mergel,1998).

From the assumptions of the two experts, I can infer that the development of cognitivism happened in the 1950s as the dominant theory of learning. Unfortunately, the impact of it in the language learning occurred in 1970s. One of the real impacts is the influence on instructional design. In this case, the development of cognitive theory in psychology is as the response of behaviorism (asiaeuniversity, 2012:106). As we know that, behaviorism is the theory of language learning which emphasize in observable behavior. The answer why cognitivism theory appears as the response of behaviorism theory was because the behaviorist psychologist tried to avoid the use of mental process in our mind. They tried to erase the cognitivism theory. In other words, they just would like to explain something which is observable, not the unobservable one (cognitivism).

FACTORS INFLUENCED THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVISM

After we know the history of cognitivism, it is important for us to know the factors influenced the development of it. According to Jordan, Carlite & Stack (2008: 36-37) there are four factors influenced it. They are the development of experimental psychology, the move from an interest in external behaviors to internal brain process, the inadequacy of computer and an interest in artificial intelligence.

DEFINITION OF COGNITIVISM

According to Mergel (1998) cognitivism is a cognitivist theory that based on thought process behind the behavior. It means that the theory occurs inside the learners mind consciously. Moreover, it focuses on how people think, how people understand, and how people know (asiaeuniversity, 2012:107).How people think is the theory stresses in how our ways of thinking will impact to the behavior. How people understand is the theory shows the people's understanding related to outside world. How people know is the theory shows how the people know phenomenon outside the world. Of course, it derives from the process that happens in human mind.

An individual 's cognition plays a significant and primary role in the development and maintenance of emotional and behavioural responses to life situation (Prendes & Resko). In other words, cognitivist theory as the study of mental process could impact or influence the individual's emotion and behavioural

responses because it is a process in determining on how person thinks, understands, and knows.

PRINCIPLES OF COGNITIVISM

Cognitivism involves the study of mental processes such as sensation, perception, attention, encoding, and memory that behaviorists were reluctant to study because cognition occurs inside the "black box" of the brain (Jordan, Carlite & Stack, 2008:36). In this case, sensation perception, attention, encoding, and memory are the principle of cognitivism. The followings are the explanation of them.

The first principle is sensation. It shows how the stimuli derived from external stimuli is registered in sensory before it being sent to the following process. The second principle is perception which shows as the process to interpret and make sense something which can be seen through our sense. It consists of pattern recognition, object recognition, bottom up or top down processing, and conscious perception. The third principle is attention which stresses in the concentrating to one thing, that the most importance than the others. It is important to determine the conscious awareness. The fourth principle is encoding as the principle of cognitive theory focuses on the importance of encoding information, after something being perceived and attended to stimuli. The way to encode the information can be done through organizing and then form it in the form of schema. In this case, to encode the information in the form of experience can be conducted through two ways. They are bottom up and top down (Jordan, Carlite, & Stack 2008:43). Bottom up is the way to encode experience by transferring the information that is gained through the external world. It is mediated through attention and perception. While top down is another way to encode experience. It is in the form of action prior knowledge in order to help in interpreting the bottom up. The fifth principle is memory. Memory is the ability to keep and remind the information in our mind. It consists of short term memory, long term memory, and sensory.

Short term memory consists of limited amount of data and short duration. It is also known as the working memory because it consists of some functions. They are rehearsal (repetition), coding, decision making, and retrieval. The information that can be maintained approximately 5-9 bits. According to Vinci (2000: 18) long term memory can hold a huge amount of information-facts, data, and rules for how to use and process them and the information can be maintained for long period. It means that long term memory consists of very large amount of data and very long

duration. The way to keep the information can be maintained in this type of memory is by using cues.

THREE IMPORTANT COGNITIVE THEORIES

Cognitive is a learning theory that emphasized in the process which happens inside the learners. In this case, there are three important types of cognitive theories. They are Piaget's cognitive development theory, Vygotsky's socio cultural cognitive theory and the information processing approach.

Piaget's Cognitive Development (1896-1980)

Piaget is the famous psychologist from Swiss who describes cognitive theory in the cognitive developmental theory. According to Hebb(2003: 3) Piaget's theory states the children actively construct their understanding of the world and go through stages of cognitive development. It means that Piaget described cognitivism in the stage development of children when they are ready to construct the meaning of things through their own understanding which starts from the simple to complex thing. Knowledge and thinking skills provide the substance and tools for cognitive problem solving (Bandura, 1989:9). There are two processes underlie in cognitive construction. They are organization and adaptation. Organization is important in order the children construct the meaning of thing which make sense to them by organizing our experience. For example we specify the less and important ideas then we connect them. While adaptation is useful when we add the new information in our thinking system because there is important additional information.

In this case, adaptation is differentiated into two ways. They are assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation occurs when individuals adjust to new information (Hebb, 2003:3). For example: Newborns reflexively suck everything that touches their lips (assimilation) , but after several months of experience, they construct their understanding of the world differently . They don't suck fuzzy blanket (accommodation). Piaget developed the cognitive development because he believed that the children pass the four stages of cognitive development.

The first stage is sensor motor (from birth to about two years of age). In this stage an infant tries to construct the meaning of something that he or she is seeing

and hearing. This stage emphasizes in the infant's motoric action. All the end of the stage, that is two years old babies will have complex sensor motor than before because they try to desire the meaning of thing in simple symbols. The second stage is preoperational stage (two to seven years of age). In this stage, the children try to represent the world through word, images, and drawing. The third stage is concrete operational stage (seven to eleven years of age). In this stage, the children can use the intuitive thought. It means that they try to learn from concrete to abstract thing. For instance, concrete operational thinkers can't imagine the step to complete algebra equation which is too abstract for thinking at this stage of development. The fourth stage is operational stage (eleven to fifteen years of age) In this stage, the individuals move beyond concrete experiences and think in abstract and more logical terms. For instance formal operational thinkers are more detail in solving the problems.

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION OF COGNITIVE THEORIES

According to Suharno (2010:60) the cognitive view takes the learner to be an active processor of information. It means that the cognitive theory tries to create the people to be active to think. The implication of cognitive theories in educational field is try to produce the students to find the problem solving. do discovery learning, cognitive strategies, and project based learning.

Problem Based Learning

The application of the learning is try the students to find the solution of the problem. For example the student conducts a research. It means that he or she must find the solution to solve the problems of his or her research that consists of identifies the problem, collects and analyzes the data, draws the conclusion. The strength of problem based learning are it focuses on the meaningfulness not the facts, it can improve the students' initiative, it can improve the students' learning achievement etc.

Discovery Learning

Discovery learning is one of the applications of cognitivism . According to O'Donnell(1997) "Discovery Learning is an instructional method in which the students are free to work in learning environment with little or no guidance". This assumption from O'Donnell is also supported by Ryan & Muray (2009) who assume that discovery learning is problem based learning with minimal guidance". It means that through discovery learning the teacher gives opportunity to students

to explore their selves by learning through the environment with little guidance from the teacher. There are some structures that must be paid attention in applying discovery learning. They are readiness to learn, intuitive and analytical thinking, motivates for learning. These structures must be moved from basic to advanced step.

From the example of the two types of implication of cognitive theories, the users of the theory must be paid attention to the principles itself. There are six principles of cognitivism theory to improve teaching (Magna publication, 1995). The first principle if information is to be learned, it must first be recognized as important. The second is during learning, learners act on information in ways that make it more meaningful. The third is learners store information in long term memory in an organized fashion related to their existing understanding of the world. The fourth is learners continually check understanding, which results in refinement and revision of what is retained. The fifth is transfer of learning to new contexts is not automatic, but results'-form exposure to multiple application,. The sixth is learning is facilitated when learners are aware of their learning strategies and monitor their use.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES

Cognitivism is a theory of learning studies about the process occurs inside the learner's. So, as a teacher who wants to apply the cognitivism in his or her teaching learning process, he or she must consider the strength and weaknesses of it when it applies in classroom. The weakness of cognitivism is the learners learn the way to finish the task, but it is not a good way. The strength is the students are trained to do the task in the same way to produce the students who have consistency behavior (Schuman,1996 in Mergel, 1998).

CONCLUSION

Cognitive theory is learning theory of psychology that attempts to explain human behavior by understanding the thought process. It is emphasized in the conscious thought. The theory was born in the 1950s. There are four factors influenced the development of it. They are experimental psychology, the shift from behaviorism to cognition, language acquisition and computer artificial intelligence. In this case, cognitivism is divided into three important cognitive theories emphasize their conscious thoughts. They are Piaget's cognitive development theory, Vygotsky's socio cultural cognitive theory, and the information processing approach. All of the types of cognitive theory stress on the important of process

that is happening inside the human's mind. The application of cognitive theory can be applied through problem based learning, discovery learning, cognitive strategies, and project based learning. Overall the goal of its application is to create the students to be active in teaching learning process.

The Direct Method

mother tongue forbidden

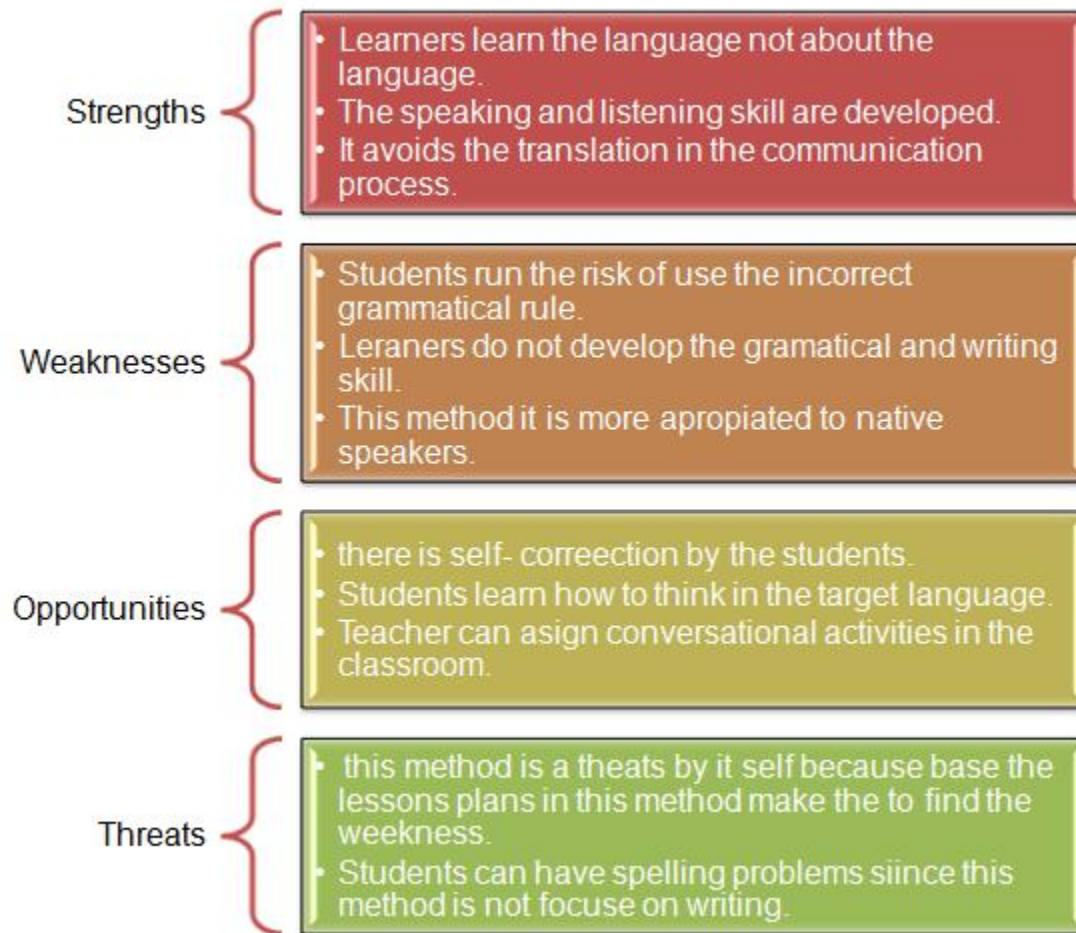
The **Direct Method** (DM) emerged in the 1890s largely as a response to the perceived inability of the Grammar-Translation Method to teach learners to genuinely communicate. The argument was that the Grammar-Translation Method taught learners about the target language but not how to speak the target-language. In DM, there is no translation. In fact mother-tongue is expressly forbidden, and all communication is directly in the target language. Vocabulary is explained through visual aids and miming. Listening and speaking skills are given priority, though reading and writing play their part. Grammar is deduced rather than instilled.

The Direct Method, also called the Natural Method, emerged first in Germany and France and was popularized by Berlitz

Typical features of a DM lesson:

- target language
- teacher/learner-centred

- teacher explains new vocab through pictures, realia or miming
 - Students are encouraged to speak in the target language in "real" contexts (eg at the doctor's or going shopping) or about "real" topics (eg sport or money).
 - Students are not taught grammar explicitly — they encounter examples and are asked to deduce the rule.
 - Vocabulary is practised by using new words in context.
-



Direct Method

BACKGROUND

The direct method, also known as the conversational method or natural method, was developed by Maximilian Berlitz (1852- 1921) towards at the end of the 19th century as a reaction to the dissatisfaction with the grammar Translation Method. This method it is called like that because the target language has to be direct connected with the meaning without

translation into the native language. Furthermore, direct teaching is a systematic instructional method that requires the teacher to have a command of the subject matter. Hence, this method is based on behaviorist learning principles; moreover, it helps to get students attention. This method continues to provoke interest and enthusiasm today, but it is not an easy methodology to use in a classroom situation. For that reason, this method that almost disappeared as a distinct method during the 1930's has become a tool for teachers to teach a foreign language.

TEACHER'S AND LEARNER'S ROLE

In this method, the role of the teacher is to direct the class activities, encourage students to participate in class by asking them questions constantly, and corrects their mistakes immediately. Something really important in this role is that students and teachers are partners in the learning process. In the other hand, the student role is less passive than in the grammar translation method. Moreover, there is student self-correction; they have to speak a lot that means that their communicative skills are emphasized.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE METHOD (APPROACH)

In this method the classroom instruction are conductive exclusively in the target language. So teachers should not use the mother tongue to teach them a new foreign language. Moreover, learners acquire the vocabulary by practicing every day. Something quite important is that the vocabulary is touch in the initial phase, and the grammar, reading and writing are introduced in the intermediate phase. The communication skills are built in a carefully way. Also in this method the grammar is taught inductively. Furthermore speech and listening skills are developing in this method. Briefly, students should speak the 80% of the class.

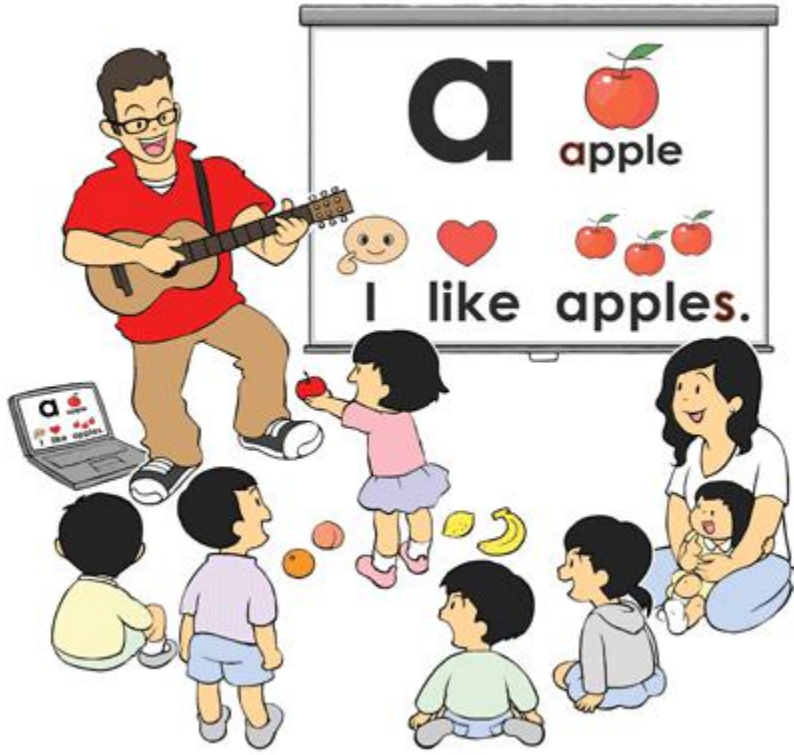
TECHNIQUES THAT WOULD BE USE FROM THIS METHOD

Some technics that can be used are reading aloud. Students can read a paragraph aloud and the teacher is going to correct the mistakes on the spot. And another one can be dictation. In this case teachers dictate a dialog or a paragraph to their students, and they have to write it down. At the end the teacher check them. At the end teacher can check it.

THE DIRECT METHOD

The Direct Method of language teaching is also called:





Approaches to Teaching of English

“An approach is a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning”.

An approach is the way we look at language. It signifies the ‘what’ aspect. The selection of an approach to the teaching of the English language depends to a great extent on the nature of the content to be presented, the learning outcome to be attained, the nature and needs of the learners, the available resources and the creation of a suitable language-learning environment.

The important approaches to the teaching of English are the following:

1. Structural Approach
2. Situational Approach
3. Oral Approach
4. Communicative Approach
5. Eclectic Approach

18.1 The Structural Approach

“The Structural Approach is a scientific study of the fundamental structures of the English language, their analysis and logical arrangement” says Brewington. The Structural Approach originated from the scientific description of language provided by American linguists like Bloomfield and sought to identify and describe formal patterns of a language in an explicit and rigorous manner. It gained popularity during 1950’s and 1960’s and there was a shift from normative grammar to descriptive grammar.

The Structural Approach is based on the assumption that language can be best learnt through a scientific selection and gradation of structures or patterns of sentences or vocabulary. The stress is on the teaching and learning of essential structures in English. According to C.S. Bhandari the Structural Approach to English is teaching the learner, certain selected structures in a certain order.

18.1.1 Objectives of the Structural Approach

The objectives of the Structural Approach are as follows.

- To lay the foundation of English by establishing through drill and repetition about 275 graded structures.
- To enable the children to attain mastery over an essential vocabulary of 3000 root words for active use.
- To correlate the teaching of grammar and composition with the reading lessons.
- To teach the four fundamental skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

18.1.2 Principles of the Structural Approach

F.G. French has given the following principles of the Structural Approach:

- *Importance of speech:* In learning a language speech is given more importance than reading and writing. Structures are presented orally and the students present them through a number of drills.
- *Formation of language habit:* The Structural Approach takes care that learning of a language is a habit formation process. Use of linguistic drills and exercises enable the students to learn the structure of English unconsciously and automatically, with ease, speed and accuracy.
- *Pupil activity:* The Structural Approach places more emphasis on pupil activity than the teacher activity. It is the child who is the learner; so he must be actively involved in the teaching learning process.
- *Mastery of structures:* In this approach, the stress is on the mastery of structures as compared to the acquisition of vocabulary. This results in effective learning of English.
- *Meaningful situations:* The teacher is expected to create meaningful situations to master the structures.
- In the Structural Approach, only one item is taken up at a time and taught to the students. A new structure is taught by using the vocabulary already learnt by students.

18.1.3 Characteristics of the Structural Approach

The essential features of the Structural Approach are as follows.

- **Contextual presentation:** Many social situations are created in the classroom so that the student becomes involved and quite unconsciously practices them. Structural items and words live in contexts and learning experiences must be life-like and they must be transferable to life.
- **Word order:** This is of primary importance in learning the English language. It is the order of words in a pattern that makes true meaning clear. There is a fixed word order for every sentence and this order signifies a particular meaning. Any change in the word order changes the meaning of the sentence. According to Frisby "A sentence is a sequence of words expressing a unit of thought and collected together into a pattern". The three main varieties of these patterns are statement pattern, question pattern and request or command pattern.
- **The use of structural words or functional words:** When these words stand by themselves, they have little or no meaning but they are very useful in forming sentences of different kinds. These words are the key to all English constructions. All the prepositions, pronouns, relatives and conjunctions are structural words. There are also structural adjectives such as this, that, these, those, any etc. and structural adverbs such as even, also, even again etc.
- **Inflections:** These inflections are changes or differences in the form of words to show the function they are doing in a sentence. The variations are intended to express case, number, gender, tense and so on.
 - a) In Verbs – I play, he plays, I am playing, I played.
 - b) In Nouns – One boy, two boys, that boy's cap, one man, two men, men's food.
 - c) In Adjectives – great, greater, greatest, good, better, best
- **Reinforcement through practice:** Each structure is drilled and firmly established. Practice fixes the material presented to achieve accurate and fluent command of the language.

- Four stages in the teaching of structure: A given mode of language structure is thus taught in four stages; focusing the syntactic pattern, shaping psychomotor responses, developing communicative skill and relating the pattern to previously taught material.
- Listening Comprehension is acquired by perceiving the construction of the sentence. The ability to hear correctly and understand perfectly needs the mastery of the structures of the language.
- Oral work makes for interesting and lively lessons and produces quicker thought and greater readiness of speech.
- Opportunities for the development of Reading Skill are also provided while learning structures.

18.1.4 Procedure

The steps involved in the Structural Approach are

- Revision of the previous structure
- Presentation of the new structure
- Creating a situation to teach the new structure
- Individual and group drill
- Reading from substitution drills
- Teaching vocabulary in presenting the structure in actual situations
- Teacher gives written practice in the class
- Assignment

18.1.5 Merits of the Structural Approach

- Controlled practice of structures leads to spontaneous productive use and facilitates accuracy.
- Carefully selected and graded language items are taught on the basis of frequency, usefulness and being teachable.
- Speech is emphasized.
- Habit formation is given importance.
- Language is taught in meaningful situations.
- Readers are written according to this approach.
- The Structural Approach has brought a system in the teaching of English. It has systematized the work of a teacher and learner.

18.1.6 Demerits of the Structural Approach

- This approach overemphasizes on oral work. So it has neglected reading and writing.
- Pupil's knowledge of the mother tongue is not exploited. They find it difficult to understand meanings in English.
- Structural Approach overemphasizes drill work which often degenerates into mechanical activity. Techniques requiring more active use of the pupil's mental powers should also be used.
- The Structural Approach is not suitable to higher classes. It is applicable to the lower classes only. The higher classes need more creative use of the language.
- Teaching of the Structural Approach needs competent teachers but now teachers trained on these lines are not available.
- It becomes difficult to complete the syllabus in time, if the structural syllabus is strictly followed.
- This is an approach which may not be helpful in the teaching of poetry and other forms of literature.

However, the Structural Approach stresses on the gradual growth of language learning. The approach is definitely an improvement on the traditional methods of teaching English in India. It has brought a system, variety, life and activity in the teaching of English. To sum up, the Structural Approach makes the young learners keen and active.

18.2 Structures

Structures are the devices by which complete meanings are conveyed. According to Prof. Hornby, "*Structures are the devices that we use to make signals, to convey meaning and to indicate relationship*". In English, the arrangement of the words in the sentence is more important than the grammatical form of the word. Using the same words in two separate sentences in a different order, yields different meaning. The different meaning is because of the different arrangement of words.

18.2.1 Types of Structures

The different patterns of words are called structures. The types of structures are as follows:

- The patterns in which words combine to form groups
 - Nominal – Verbal – Adjectival – Adverbial
- The changes in the forms of certain words
 - According to position and context
 - Number – toy – toys; thief – thieves
 - Tense – play – plays, played, playing
 - Possessive case – mine, yours, hers, theirs, etc.
 - Degree – great, greater, greatest
- Structural words which carry little or no lexical meaning but which combine with other words and help to signal the relationship between them.
 - Articles – Conjunctions – Prepositions
 - Pronouns – Relatives
 - Structural adjectives – this, that, these, those, any etc.
 - Structural adverbs – even, also, ever, again etc.
- Phrase patterns – on the table, with a knife
- Idioms are groups of words that are taught as a whole – *in the pink of health, at the eleventh hour*

18.2.2 Selection and Gradation of Structures

In any language course, one of the most important decisions to be taken relates to the amount of language material (words and structures) to be included in the course. It is clearly impossible to include the whole of English in a course of limited duration. It is therefore essential to limit the language material to a manageable number of structures and words.

In learning a foreign language in the classroom, all the features of the language cannot be practiced. Therefore, in a foreign language course, pupils' attention must be drawn to the most important features of the language for intensive practice. The syllabus compiler has to decide about which of the structural items are worth teaching (selection) and in what order they should be taught so as to ensure maximum speed and efficiency in the learning process (grading).

18.2.2.1 Principles of Selection of Structures

The selection of structures is done on both linguistic and practical considerations and the following principles are kept in view while selecting a particular structural item in a course.

Design

Natural Approach

Objectives

The Natural Approach "is for beginners and is designed to help them become intermediates." It has the expectation that students

will be able to function adequately in the target situation. They will understand the speaker of the target language (perhaps with requests for clarification), and will be able to convey (in a non-insulting manner) their requests and ideas. They need not know every word in a particular semantic domain, nor is it necessary that the syntax and vocabulary be flawless – but their production does need to be understood. They should be able to make the meaning clear but not necessarily be accurate in all details of grammar. (Krashen and Terrell 1983: 71)

However, since the Natural Approach is offered as a general set of principles applicable to a wide variety of situations, as in Communicative Language Teaching, specific objectives depend on learner needs and the skill (reading, writing, listening, or speaking) and level being taught.

Krashen and Terrell believe that it is important to communicate to learners what they can expect of a course as well as what they should not expect. They offer as an example a possible goal and nongoal statement for a beginning Natural Approach Spanish class:

After 100–150 hours of Natural Approach Spanish, you *will* be able to: "get around" in Spanish; you will be able to communicate with a monolingual native speaker of Spanish without difficulty; read most ordinary texts in Spanish with some use of a dictionary; know enough Spanish to continue to improve on your own.

After 100–150 hours of Natural Approach Spanish you will *not* be able to: pass for a native speaker, use Spanish as easily as you use English, understand native speakers when they talk to each other (you will probably not be able to eavesdrop successfully); use Spanish on the telephone with great comfort; participate easily in a conversation with several other native speakers on unfamiliar topics. (Krashen and Terrell 1983: 74)

The syllabus

Krashen and Terrell (1983) approach course organization from two points of view. First, they list some typical goals for language courses and suggest which of these goals are the ones at which the Natural Approach aims. They list such goals under four areas:

1. Basic personal communication skills: oral (e.g., listening to announcements in public places)
2. Basic personal communication skills: written (e.g., reading and writing personal letters)

3. Academic learning skills: oral (e.g., listening to a lecture)
4. Academic learning skills: written (e.g., taking notes in class)

Of these, they note that the Natural Approach is primarily "designed to develop basic communication skills – both oral and written" (1983: 67). They then observe that communication goals "may be expressed in terms of situations, functions and topics" and proceed to order four pages of topics and situations "which are likely to be most useful to beginning students" (1983: 67). The functions are not specified or suggested but are felt to derive naturally from the topics and situations. This approach to syllabus design would appear to derive to some extent from threshold level specifications (see Chapter 14).

The second point of view holds that "the purpose of a language course will vary according to the needs of the students and their particular interests" (Krashen and Terrell (1983: 65):

The goals of a Natural Approach class are based on an assessment of student needs. We determine the situations in which they will use the target language and the sorts of topics they will have to communicate information about. In setting communication goals, we do not expect the students at the end of a particular course to have acquired a certain group of structures or forms. Instead we expect them to deal with a particular set of topics in a given situation. We do not organize the activities of the class about a grammatical syllabus. (Krashen and Terrell 1983: 71)

From this point of view, it is difficult to specify communicative goals that necessarily fit the needs of all students. Thus, any list of topics and situations must be understood as syllabus suggestions rather than as specifications.

As well as fitting the needs and interests of students, content selection should aim to create a low affective filter by being interesting and fostering a friendly, relaxed atmosphere, should provide a wide exposure to vocabulary that may be useful to basic personal communication, and should resist any focus on grammatical structures, since if input is provided "over a wider variety of topics while pursuing communicative goals, the necessary grammatical structures are automatically provided in the input" (Krashen and Terrell 1983: 71).

Types of learning and teaching activities

From the beginning of a class taught according to the Natural Approach, emphasis is on presenting comprehensible input in the target language. Teacher talk focuses on objects in the classroom and on the content of pictures, as with the Direct Method. To minimize stress, learners are not required to say anything until they feel ready, but they are expected to respond to teacher commands and questions in other ways.

When learners are ready to begin talking in the new language, the teacher provides comprehensible language and simple response opportunities. The teacher talks slowly and distinctly, asking questions and eliciting one-word answers. There is a gradual progression from Yes/No questions, through either-or questions, to questions that students can answer using words they have heard used by the teacher. Students are not expected to use a word actively until they have heard it many times. Charts, pictures, advertisements, and other realia serve as the focal point for questions, and when the students' competence permits, talk moves to class members. "Acquisition activities" – those that focus on meaningful communication rather than language form – are emphasized. Pair or group work may be employed, followed by whole-class discussion led by the teacher.

Techniques recommended by Krashen and Terrell are often borrowed from other methods and adapted to meet the requirements of Natural Approach theory. These include command-based activities from Total Physical Response; Direct Method activities in which mime, gesture, and context are used to elicit questions and answers; and even situation-based practice of structures and patterns. Group-work activities are often identical to those used in Communicative Language Teaching, where sharing information in order to complete a task is emphasized. There is nothing novel about the procedures and techniques advocated for use with the Natural Approach. A casual observer might not be aware of the philosophy underlying the classroom techniques he or she observes. What characterizes the Natural Approach is the use of familiar techniques within the framework of a method that focuses on providing comprehensible input and a classroom environment that cues comprehension of input, minimizes learner anxiety, and maximizes learner self-confidence.

Learner roles

There is a basic assumption in the Natural Approach that learners should not try to learn a language in the usual sense. The extent to which they can lose themselves in activities involving meaningful communication will determine the amount and kind of acquisition they will experience and the fluency they will ultimately demonstrate. The language acquirer is seen as a processor of comprehensible input. The acquirer is challenged by input that is slightly beyond his or her current level of competence and is able to assign meaning to this input through active use of context and extralinguistic information.

Learners' roles are seen to change according to their stage of linguistic development. Central to these changing roles are learner decisions on when to speak, what to speak about, and what linguistic expressions to use in speaking.

In the *pre-production stage*, students "participate in the language activity without having to respond in the target language" (Krashen and Terrell 1983: 76). For example, students can act out physical commands, identify student colleagues from teacher description, point to pictures, and so forth.

In the *early-production stage*, students respond to either-or questions, use single words and short phrases, fill in charts, and use fixed conversational patterns (e.g., How are you? What's your name?).

In the *speech-emergent phase*, students involve themselves in role play and games, contribute personal information and opinions, and participate in group problem solving.

Learners have four kinds of responsibilities in the Natural Approach classroom:

1. Provide information about their specific goals so that acquisition activities can focus on the topics and situations most relevant to their needs.
2. Take an active role in ensuring comprehensible input. They should learn and use conversational management techniques to regulate input.
3. Decide when to start producing speech and when to upgrade it.
4. Where learning exercises (i.e., grammar study) are to be a part of the program, decide with the teacher the relative amount of time to be devoted to them and perhaps even complete and correct them independently.

Learners are expected to participate in communication activities with other learners. Although communication activities are seen to provide naturalistic practice and to create a sense of camaraderie, which lowers the affective filter, they may fail to provide learners with well-formed and comprehensible input at the $I + 1$ level. Krashen and Terrell warn of these shortcomings but do not suggest means for their amelioration.

Teacher roles

The Natural Approach teacher has three central roles. First, the teacher is the primary source of comprehensible input in the target language. "Class time is devoted primarily to providing input for acquisition," and the teacher is the primary generator of that input. In this role, the teacher is required to generate a constant flow of language input while providing a multiplicity of nonlinguistic clues to assist students in interpreting the input. The Natural Approach demands a much more center-stage role for the teacher than do many contemporary communicative methods.

Second, the Natural Approach teacher creates a classroom atmosphere that is interesting, friendly, and in which there is a low affective filter for

learning. This is achieved in part through such Natural Approach techniques as not demanding speech from the students before they are ready for it, not correcting student errors, and providing subject matter of high interest to students.

Finally, the teacher must choose and orchestrate a rich mix of classroom activities, involving a variety of group sizes, content, and contexts. The teacher is seen as responsible for collecting materials and designing their use. These materials, according to Krashen and Terrell, are based not just on teacher perceptions but on elicited student needs and interests.

As with other nonorthodox teaching systems, the Natural Approach teacher has a particular responsibility to communicate clearly and compellingly to students the assumptions, organization, and expectations of the method, since in many cases these will violate student views of what language learning and teaching are supposed to be.

The role of instructional materials

The primary goal of materials in the Natural Approach is to make classroom activities as meaningful as possible by supplying "the extralinguistic context that helps the acquirer to understand and thereby to acquire" (Krashen and Terrell 1983: 55), by relating classroom activities to the real world, and by fostering real communication among the learners. Materials come from the world of realia rather than from textbooks. The primary aim of materials is to promote comprehension and communication. Pictures and other visual aids are essential, because they supply the content for communication. They facilitate the acquisition of a large vocabulary within the classroom. Other recommended materials include schedules, brochures, advertisements, maps, and books at levels appropriate to the students, if a reading component is included in the course. Games, in general, are seen as useful classroom materials, since "games by their very nature, focus the students on what it is they are doing and use the language as a tool for reaching the goal rather than as a goal in itself" (Terrell 1982: 121). The selection, reproduction, and collection of materials places a considerable burden on the Natural Approach teacher. Since Krashen and Terrell suggest a syllabus of topics and situations, it is likely that at some point collections of materials to supplement teacher presentations will be published, built around the "syllabus" of topics and situations recommended by the Natural Approach.

Procedure

We have seen that the Natural Approach adopts techniques and activities freely from various method sources and can be regarded as innovative only with respect to the purposes for which they are recommended and

the ways they are used. Krashen and Terrell (1983) provide suggestions for the use of a wide range of activities, all of which are familiar components of Situational Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching, and other methods discussed in this book. To illustrate procedural aspects of the Natural Approach, we will cite examples of how such activities are to be used in the Natural Approach classroom to provide comprehensible input, without requiring production of responses or minimal responses in the target language.

1. Start with TPR [Total Physical Response] commands. At first the commands are quite simple: "Stand up. Turn around. Raise your right hand."
2. Use TPR to teach names of body parts and to introduce numbers and sequence. "Lay your right hand on your head, put both hands on your shoulder, first touch your nose, then stand up and turn to the right three times" and so forth.
3. Introduce classroom terms and props into commands. "Pick up a pencil and put it under the book, touch a wall, go to the door and knock three times." Any item which can be brought to the class can be incorporated. "Pick up the record and place it in the tray. Take the green blanket to Larry. Pick up the soap and take it to the woman wearing the green blouse."
4. Use names of physical characteristics and clothing to identify members of the class by name. The instructor uses context and the items themselves to make the meanings of the key words clear: hair, long, short, etc. Then a student is described. "What is your name?" (selecting a student). "Class. Look at Barbara. She has long brown hair. Her hair is long and brown. Her hair is not short. It is long." (Using mime, pointing and context to ensure comprehension.) "What's the name of the student with long brown hair?" (Barbara). Questions such as "What is the name of the woman with the short blond hair?" or "What is the name of the student sitting next to the man with short brown hair and glasses?" are very simple to understand by attending to key words, gestures and context. And they require the students only to remember and produce the name of a fellow student. The same can be done with articles of clothing and colors. "Who is wearing a yellow shirt? Who is wearing a brown dress?"
5. Use visuals, typically magazine pictures, to introduce new vocabulary and to continue with activities requiring only student names as response. The instructor introduces the pictures to the entire class one at a time focusing usually on one single item or activity in the picture. He may introduce one to five new words while talking about the picture. He then passes the picture to a particular student in the class. The students' task is to remember the name of the student with a particular picture. For example, "Tom has the picture of the sailboat. Joan has the picture of the family watching television" and so forth. The instructor will ask questions like "Who has the picture with the sailboat? Does Susan or Tom have the picture of the people on the beach?" Again the students need only produce a name in response.

6. Combine use of pictures with TPR. "Jim, find the picture of the little girl with her dog and give it to the woman with the pink blouse."
7. Combine observations about the pictures with commands and conditionals. "If there is a woman in your picture, stand up. If there is something blue in your picture, touch your right shoulder."
8. Using several pictures, ask students to point to the picture being described. Picture 1. "There are several people in this picture. One appears to be a father, the other a daughter. What are they doing? Cooking. They are cooking a hamburger." Picture 2. "There are two men in this picture. They are young. They are boxing." Picture 3 . . .

(Krashen and Terrell 1983: 75-77)

In all these activities, the instructor maintains a constant flow of "comprehensible input," using key vocabulary items, appropriate gestures, context, repetition, and paraphrase to ensure the comprehensibility of the input.

Conclusion

The Natural Approach belongs to a tradition of language teaching methods based on observation and interpretation of how learners acquire both first and second languages in nonformal settings. Such methods reject the formal (grammatical) organization of language as a prerequisite to teaching. They hold with Newmark and Reibel that "an adult can effectively be taught by grammatically unordered materials" and that such an approach is, indeed, "the *only* learning process which we know for certain will produce mastery of the language at a native level" (1968: 153). In the Natural Approach, a focus on comprehension and meaningful communication as well as the provision of the right kinds of comprehensible input provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for successful classroom second and foreign language acquisition. This has led to a new rationale for the integration and adaptation of techniques drawn from a wide variety of existing sources. Like Communicative Language Teaching, the Natural Approach is hence evolutionary rather than revolutionary in its procedures. Its greatest claim to originality lies not in the techniques it employs but in their use in a method that emphasizes comprehensible and meaningful practice activities, rather than production of grammatically perfect utterances and sentences.

Bibliography and further reading

- Balra, A. 1992. On breaking with tradition: The significance of Terrell's Natural Approach. *Canadian Modern Language Review* 49(3): 565-593.
- Berne, J. 1990. A comparison of teaching for proficiency with the natural approach: Procedure, design and approach. *Hispania* 73(4): 147-153.

- Brown, J. M., and A. Palmer. 1988. *Listening Approach: Methods and Materials for Applying Krashen's Input Hypothesis*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Cole, R. 1931. *Modern Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Ellis, R. 1997. *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gregg, K. 1984. Krashen's monitor and Occam's razor. *Applied Linguistics* 5(2): 79-100.
- Hashemipour, P., R. Maldonado, and M. van Naerssen (eds.). 1995. *Studies in Language Learning and Spanish Linguistics: Festschrift in Honor of Tracy D. Terrell*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Krashen, S. 1981. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Krashen, S. 1982. *Principles and Practices in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Krashen, S. 1985. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. London: Longman.
- Krashen, S. 1989. We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the input hypothesis. *Modern Language Journal*. 73(4): 440-464.
- Krashen, S. 1992. *Fundamentals of Language Education*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Laredo.
- Krashen, S. 1993. The case for free voluntary reading. *Canadian Modern Language Review* 50(1): 72-82.
- Krashen, S. 1996. The case for narrow listening. *System* 24(1): 97-100.
- Krashen, S. 1997. The comprehension hypothesis: Recent evidence. *English Teachers' Journal* (Israel). 51: 17-29.
- Krashen, S. 1996. Principles of English as a foreign language. *English Teachers' Journal* (Israel) 49: 11-19.
- Krashen, S., and T. Terrell. 1983. *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- McLaughlin, B. 1978. The Monitor Model: Some methodological considerations. *Language Learning* 28(2): 309-332.
- Newmark, L., and D. A. Reibel. 1968. Necessity and sufficiency in language learning. *International Review of Applied Linguistics* 6(2): 145-164.
- Rivers, W. 1981. *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Skehan, P. 1998. *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stevick, E. W. 1976. *Memory, Meaning and Method: Some Psychological Perspectives on Language Learning*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- Terrell, T. D. 1977. A natural approach to second language acquisition and learning. *Modern Language Journal* 61: 325-336.
- Terrell, T. D. 1981. The natural approach in bilingual education. MS. California Office of Bilingual Education.
- Terrell, T. D. 1982. The natural approach to language teaching: An update. *Modern Language Journal* 66: 121-132.

- This approach is able to bring about practical mastery of speech.
- Instant corrections are possible. This implies that the learner is to be supplied with the correct forms.
- The Oral Approach is also called as the Aural – Oral Approach because listening and speaking are inseparable.
- Only the Oral Approach can provide situations to produce spontaneous responses.
- This approach can be profitably exploited for teaching reading and writing through various question-answer techniques.
- Oral Approach helps slow learners to have sufficient self-confidence and to use the language without inhibition.

18.4.3 Disadvantages

There are a few disadvantages in the use of this approach.

- The Oral Approach leads to the problem of pronunciation. There are a few sounds and sound sequences which are not found in the Indian languages and hence pose problems in pronunciation.
- Lack of competent teachers. Unfortunately some teachers lack resourcefulness and cannot speak fluently.
- This is a time-consuming and laborious process of oral practice.
- Adult learners are often shy to speak English.

18.5 The Communicative Approach

The broad term 'Communicative Approach' refers to the development of language learning or teaching from form-based to a meaning-based approach and the shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred classes. This approach has for its goal not just communication but communicative competence which is the ability, not only to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use them.

The Communicative Approach has resulted in the inclusion of vocabulary and activities for expressing one's feelings and language learning, for sharing one's values and viewpoints with others and for developing a better understanding of their feelings and needs. In the opinion of Strevens (1985), there are six types of communicative functions with language, namely, judgement and evaluation, persuasion, argument, rational enquiry and exposition, personal emotion and emotional relations with the persons spoken to.

The Communicative Approach was born during the early years of the 1970's simultaneously in Europe and North America. This approach is a move in the direction of meaning as also in that of a language classroom which allowed the learner to have initiative and choice.

18.5.1 What is Communicative Competence?

Communicative competence is defined as "the ability to cope with the interactive structuring of discourse" Widdowson, 1985. It refers to "the knowledge both of rules of grammar, vocabulary and semantics and rules of speaking" (Hymes, 1972). It represents what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant setting. It is an ability to skillfully employ the resources and rules of language use. Linguistic competence is part of communicative competence and the development of communicative skills involves the acquisition and command over skills than content.

18.5.2 Principles of the Communicative Approach

The Principles of the Communicative Approach to teaching and learning of English are as follows:

- Communication is meaning based, conventional, appropriate, interactional and structural.
- The approach is a move towards the 'process', 'task' and 'discovery' orientations of materials.
- It believes in the appropriateness of use and a shift of emphasis from accuracy to fluency.
- Language is conventional and those utterances that are conventionally used need to be learned for communication. The conventional aspects of language usage such as conversational openers, routine formulae, ceremonial formulae, memorized clauses etc. need to be learned.
- Communication includes the knowledge of communicative strategies. The style should vary with respect to the situation, the task, the role of the participants etc.
- Communication is aimed mainly at the speaker's and listener's need to feel valued and approved. Conversation is a form of a social encounter – a way of communicating meaning or ideas.

18.5.3 Characteristics of the Communicative Approach

The Communicative Approach is marked by the following characteristics.

- This approach involves a task structure and a process structure. In the former the speaker creates discourse that is coherent. Different elements of discourse include conversation, discussion, debate, description, narration and instruction. Process structure comprises the use of word indicators to show how our ideas are related such as 'In any case', 'To begin with' etc.
- The prime focus is on the learner. The teacher is just a facilitator who provides material and helps the pupils to become autonomous learners.
- The Communicative Approach relies on authentic materials.
- The tasks set are purposeful and meaningful. This, in turn, means that a communicative task can be judged immediately for its 'success' by the learner.
- Communicative Approach emphasizes on the functions of a language rather than the rules.
- This approach is fluency-based rather than accuracy-based.
- The Communicative Approach is interactive in nature. The learner interacts with the teacher and peers in the learning situation and his proficiency gradually increases through such interactions.

18.5.4 Procedure

- The teacher presents a brief dialogue – discusses the function, situation setting, roles, topic, formality or informality of the language used in the dialogue.
- The teacher allows oral practice of each utterance of the dialogue in chorus or in groups or individually.
- Teacher sets questions based on the dialogue and elicits answers.
- Questions on the student's personal experience are also asked.
- A few more examples are given for the function using pictures, real objects or dramatization.
- The learners are helped to discover the rules underlying the functional expression or structure and its form in speech and writing.

- The pupils are given activities to recognize and interpret the functions.
- A few more oral production activities are given proceeding from guided to free communication activities.
- Children copy the dialogues if they are not in their course books.
- Samples of written homework are provided for the children.
- The functions learnt orally are evaluated.

18.5.5 Techniques used in Communicative Approach

In Communicative Language teaching, the following techniques can be used in the classroom.

- Language games provide the play-way method of developing oral communication skills. Language games such as word hunt, word building, word puzzles, tongue twisters etc., can be used
- *Mind energizing tasks*: Communicative activities are based on the implicit recognition that a learner learns best when his/her mind is on tasks to be done in the language rather than on language itself. Thus many problem-solving activities are a part of the Communicative Approach.
- *Role-Play*: Since the ability to manipulate language in a social context is an important aspect of communicative competence, most communicative materials include role-play as part of the activities
- *Retrieving text order*: This is done through scrambled sentences and scrambled picture techniques.
- Group work/Pair work forms an important part of any communicative activity, for peer interaction is an effective means of acquiring some language features which are not available in a formal teacher-centred class.
- Other techniques include storytelling, question and answer session, interview, debate, group discussion, expressing opinions, giving comments, narrating a sequence of events, preparing gist of text, letter writing, writing of dialogues, reports and notices.

18.5.6 Merits of the Communicative Approach

- By interacting in pairs and small groups, pupils feel confident and do better. Learning becomes a self-generating exercise.
- The pupils get more language practice.

- The pupils acquire fluency, accuracy and appropriateness of language usage.
- Cooperation in language learning is a great motivating factor and helps each individual to shed his shyness and show his individuality in using English.
- This approach is situational, meaningful and motivating others and is self-rewarding.

18.5.7 Demerits of the Communicative Approach

- The use of authentic language may make it difficult for a teacher who is not proficient in English.
- Overcrowded classrooms and unwieldy benches make group work and face-to-face discussion very difficult to organize.
- The communicative approach leaves a gap between what is taught and what is learned and leaves something for the pupil to find out for himself.
- Less attention is paid to the explicit presentation and discussion of grammatical rules.

18.6 Eclectic Approach

The Eclectic Approach is based on the fact that no particular method is applicable to all kinds of situations and thus the teacher has to pick up a method out of a range of methods which is most appropriate for a particular situation. The primary concern of this approach is the development of language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus, instead of rigidly following a particular method for all purposes, the teacher is free to select a particular method for a specific purpose. He needs to be eclectic in his approach to teach the language skills. No aspect of language skills is ignored or neglected by the teacher.

Thus the effectiveness of the different approaches to the teaching of English varies with respect to different content areas of language development.

