

Language Teaching Approaches

Grammar-Translation Approach

- ❖ Instruction is given in the native language of the students.
- ❖ A typical exercise is to translate sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.

Direct Approach

- ❖ No use of the mother tongue is permitted (i.e. ' teacher does not need to know the students' native language).
- ❖ Grammar is learned inductively.

Reading Approach

- ❖ Only the grammar useful for reading comprehension is taught.
- ❖ Reading comprehension is the only language skill emphasized.

Audiolingualism Approach

- ❖ Lessons begin with a dialogue..
- ❖ Skills are sequenced: listening, speaking– reading, writing postponed.

Situational Approach

- ❖ The spoken language is primary.
- ❖ New items (lexical and grammatical) are introduced and practiced in real situations (e.g. at the post office, at the bank, at the dinner table).

Cognitive Approach

- ❖ Language learning is viewed as rule acquisition, not habit formation.
- ❖ Pronunciation is de-emphasized; perfection is viewed as unrealistic.

Affective-Humanistic Approach

- ❖ Respect is emphasized for the individual (each student, the teacher) and for his/her feelings.
- ❖ The teacher is viewed as a counselor of facilitator.

Comprehension-Based Approach

- ❖ Learners should not speak until they feel ready to do so; this results in better pronunciation than when the learner is forced to speak immediately.
- ❖ Errors correction is seen as unnecessary and perhaps even counterproductive; the important thing is that the learners can understand and can make themselves understood.

Communicative Approach

- ❖ The goal of language teaching is learner's ability to communicate in the target language.
- ❖ The teacher's role is primarily to facilitate communication and only secondarily to correct errors.

Different syllabuses :

There are different syllabuses

a- The grammar syllabus :

This is the commonest type of syllabus, both traditionally and currently. A list of items is sequenced in such a way that the students gradually acquire a knowledge of grammatical structures, leading to an understanding of the grammatical system.

b- The lexical syllabus :

It is possible to organize a syllabus on the basis of vocabulary and lexis to create a lexical syllabus (the vocabulary related to topics...e.g. art, clothes, crime). A problem with lexical syllabuses is the relationship between lexis and grammar.

c- The functional Syllabus :

A functional syllabus might look like this:

- Requesting
- Offering
- Inviting
- Agreeing and disagreeing

The syllabus designer then chooses (ways of expression) for each function.

For example, for offering, the designer could choose from the following:

Would you like to.....?
Do you want some help?
I'll help you if you want.
Let me give you a hand.
I'll do that.....

d- The situational Syllabus :

A situational syllabus offers the possibility of selecting and sequencing different real-life situations rather than different grammatical units, vocabulary topics, or functions.

A situational syllabus might look something like this:

- At the bank
- At the supermarket
- At the travel agent
- At the restaurant

Where students have specific communicative needs, organizing teaching material by the situations which students will need to operate in is attractive, since the syllabus designer will be able to define the situation, the likely participants, and communicative goals with some certainty. (Business & tourism students vs. students of general language)

e- The topic-based syllabus :

Another framework around which to organize language is that of different topics (e.g. weather, sport, music). The weather topic, for example, can be subdivided into items such as the way weather changes, weather forecasting, weather and mood, and the damage that weather can cause.

f- The task-based syllabus:

A task-based syllabus lists a series of tasks, and may later list some or all of the language to be used in those tasks. (India experience). Six task types can be used with almost any topic. These are: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experience, and creative tasks. As with situations and topics, it is difficult to know how to grade tasks in terms of difficulty.

Testing Students

The Characteristics of Tests

There are four main reasons for testing which give rise to four categories of test :

1- Placement test :

Placing new students in the right class in a school is facilitated with the use of placement tests. They usually test grammar and vocabulary knowledge and assess students' productive and receptive skills.

2- Diagnostic tests :

While placement tests are designed to show how good a student's English is in relation to a previously agreed system of levels, diagnostic tests can be used to expose learner difficulties, gaps in their knowledge, and skill deficiencies during a course. Thus, when we know what the problems are, we can do something about them.

3- Progress or achievement tests :

These tests are designed to measure learners' language and skill progress in relation to the syllabus they have been following. Achievement tests at the end of a term (like progress tests at the end of a unit) should reflect progress, not failure. They should reinforce the

learning that has taken place, not go out of their way to expose weaknesses. They can also help us to decide on changes to future teaching programs.

4- Proficiency tests :

They give a general picture of a student's knowledge and ability (rather than measure progress). They are frequently used as stages people have to reach if they want to be admitted to a foreign university, get a job, or obtain some kind of certificate.

Characteristics Of A Good Test

- In order to judge the effectiveness of any test, it is sensible to lay down criteria against which the test can be measured, as follows:

1- Validity :

A test is valid if it tests what is supposed to test. Thus it is not valid, for example, to test writing ability with an essay question that requires specialist knowledge of history or biology. A particular kind of validity that concerns most test designers is face validity. This means that the test should look, on the 'face' of it, as if it is valid.

2- Reliability :

A good test should give consistent results. For example, if the same group of students took the same tests twice within two days----without reflecting on the first test before they sat it again ---- they should get the same results on each occasion. If they took another similar test, the result should be consistent. In practice, reliability is enhanced by making the test instructions clear, restricting the scope for variety in the answers.

General Testing Terminology

1- Test and Quiz :

- Both tests and quizzes play a role in the language classroom. The distinction between test and quiz is one of dimension and purpose rather than of item content.
- The test is announced in advance and covers a specific unit of instruction, be it part of a lesson or several lessons. In reviewing for a test, students pull together the work of several class periods. Classroom tests may be given every two or three weeks. Such tests may be constructed to last the entire class period; in this case, optimum learning efficiency requires the teacher to return and discuss the corrected test as soon as the class meets again.
- The essence of the quiz is brevity. In contrast to the test, it may be unannounced. Frequent quizzes encourage students to devote time regularly to their language study. Moreover, the quiz enables the teacher to acquaint students with types of items that will subsequently be used in tests.

2- Objective and subjective test items :

An objective item is one for which there is a specific correct response; therefore, whether the item is scored by one teacher or another, whether it is scored today or last week, it is always scored the same way (Multiple-choice items & fill-in the blank). A subjective item is one that does not have a single right answer (interview & short composition).

3- Speed and power tests :

On a speed test, the student works against time (typing & translation). On a power test, the student is given sufficient time to finish the test. Some students may not answer all the questions, but this is because they are unable to do so, not because they were rushed.

4- Formative and summative evaluation :

The formative test is given during the course instruction; its purpose is to show which aspects of the chapter the student has mastered and where remedial work is necessary. The formative test is normally graded on a pass-fail basis, and students who fail are given the opportunity to study and then take the test again. The summative test, on the other hand, is usually given at the end of a marking period and measures the sum total of the material covered.

5- Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests :

The norm-referenced test compares a student's performance against the performance of other students (Curve). The criterion-referenced test indicates whether the student has met predetermined objective or criteria.

6- Discrete-point and global testing :

Discrete-point tests measure whether or not the student has mastered specific elements of the second language. Global language tests measure the student's ability to understand and use language in context.

7- Pure vs. hybrid test items :

On a pure test item, the student uses only one skill. In hybrid test item, two or more skills are used.

8- Pre-testing and post-testing :

The pre-test is given prior to teaching a course or a unit of instruction. It is similar in form and content of the post-test that is given at the end of the course or the unit.