
English Language Teaching: The Bilingual Method

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Abstract

English is the common language for communication as there are many regional languages in India. People think that English Education gives their children good life and future. Bilingual Method allows the teacher and pupils to use two languages; one is the target language to be learnt and the other mother-tongue which is used to achieve the target language English. Bilingual Method is suitable to Indian multicultural context where people speak different regional languages. The important contribution of this method is that it had made possible for the students to get both quantitative and qualitative acquisition of language skills.

Keywords: Bilingual Method, Methods, Approaches and Techniques

Introduction

English is considered global language as it has spread widely in the present scientific and technological world since we are living in the globalised society or global village. During and after the British rule, English has been officially used in Indian government administration and other systems. According to The Indian Constitution, English is an associate official language. English is the common language for communication as there are many regional languages in India. It is the link language and window to the world. People understand the advantages and the importance of English language which is the medium of instruction in educational institutions, and government and private offices. In India almost all the people can understand English and educated Indians are good at English language skills-LSRW (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Rationale

People think that English Education gives their children good life and future. Therefore, they are crazy of English and sending their children to English medium schools and convents.

English as Window to the World: Jawaharlal Nehru said, "English is our major window on the world." This means English gives us glimpses on the various developments taking place in the world.

English is the language of cultural give and take. Gandhiji Said, "English is a language of diplomacy and it contains many a rich treasure, it gives us an introduction to Western thought and culture."

In 1835 Lord Macaulay, first proposed and introduced English language teaching in India through his "Minute of Education". In 1854, Sir Charles Wood said English was the suitable medium of instruction for higher education and the knowledge of English was a prerequisite to seek admission into any established university. After independence with the 1960 English became an official language. Then with the pass of 'Kothari Commission (1964-66)', English became a medium of instruction in all major universities of India and in present day it is becoming a second language of India.

In the present day scenario the globalised circumstances make the people think that English is a global language, lingua franca for both domestic and international communication, a language of trade, industry and information and it provides confidence, imagination and power to invent and create. So, the teaching of English should be given a lot of importance and strengthened by improved methods, approaches and techniques.

Literature Review

ELT: Methods, Approaches and Techniques: In the classroom ELT teachers can use different techniques of language teaching, which are based on the communicative language teaching and or task based methods. Firstly, language learners should know about the Methods, Approaches, Techniques and their elements to be used and followed in the classroom. The following figure1 explains what they are:

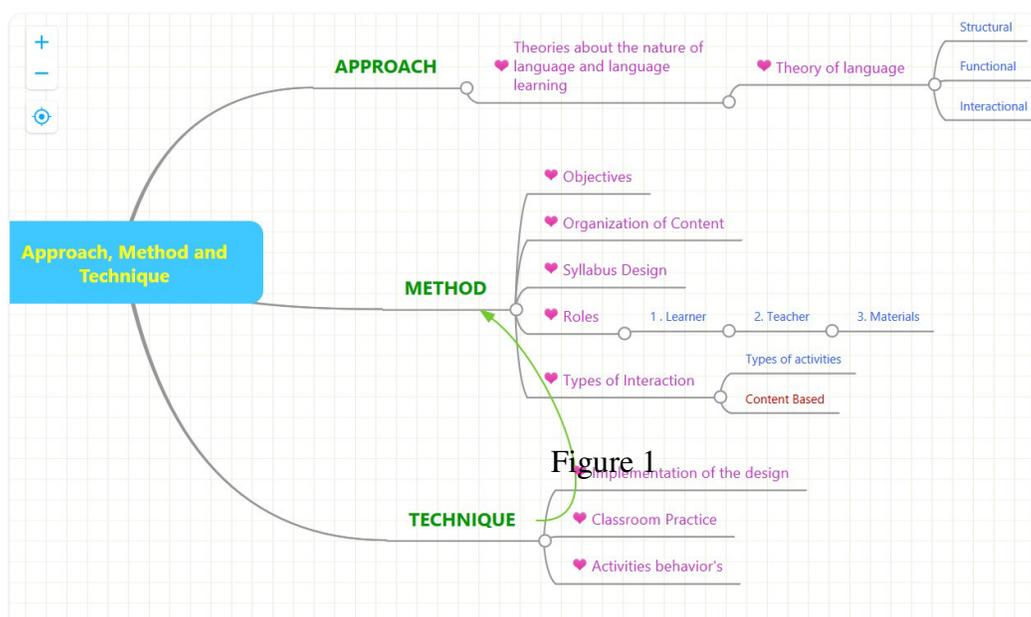


Figure 1

Approach: is a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning, and teaching.

Method: is an overall plan for systematic presentation of language based upon a selected Approach

Technique: means some specific activities manifested in the classroom that are consistent with a method and therefore in harmony with an approach.

The general view of academic researchers and linguists is that there is no single and suitable method which is applicable to all types of learners in all contexts. It is to understand that no teaching method is good or superior to the others. Every method has its importance and specialty to be used based on the needs of learners. In this paper bilingual method is taken and discussed its merits and demerits of teaching English in the classroom.

Bilingual Method

Prof. C.J. Dodson Wales (1967) developed the bilingual method of foreign language teaching, as a counterpart of the audiovisual method and he set out to make improvements to the audio-visual method. In this method, there are two revolutionary principles based on the results of scientifically controlled experiments in primary and secondary schools. This method allows the teacher and pupils to use two languages; one is the target language to be learnt and the other

mother-tongue which is used to achieve the target language English. The teacher frequently reads and transforms the text into mother tongue of the pupil. In bilingual method there are three main stages of any language lesson, or the traditional three P's:

presentation

practice

production

Principles of the Bilingual Method

- Pupils can understand the words and sentences in foreign languages easier by the use of mother tongue.
- In the classroom the teacher doesn't need to create any artificial situations while teaching or explaining the meaning of words and sentences of the target language.
- Bilingual method is the combination of the Direct method and the Grammar translation method.

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Advantages

- This method emphasizes on speech practice and provides greater practice in speaking English
- It suits both rural and urban schools and makes use of linguistic habits formed during learning mother-tongue.
- It makes Pupil learn two languages at a time and saves time, energy and labour of the teacher.
- It facilitates even an average teacher of English to teach the lesson successfully.
- It does not require any teaching aids and is suitable to all kinds of students.

Disadvantage

- This method is still in an experimental stage and ignores other aspects like reading, writing.
- It neglects systematic teaching of grammar and makes students passive listeners.
- It makes pupils unable to think freely and they become dependent on their mother tongue.
- It is sometimes rather impossible to provide a correct mother-tongue equivalent.
- A contrast between the features of the two languages is likely to confuse students.

Conclusion

English is the common language for communication and the medium of instruction in educational institutions, and government and private offices. It is the link language and window to the world. All these circumstances suggest that our students should learn English, for which the Bilingual Method is suitable to Indian multicultural context where people speak different regional languages.

According to Prof. H.N.L. Shastri of C.I.E.F.L., Hyderabad, “the Bilingual Method is quite effective in Indian conditions. This method has a social, economical and cultural background which suits to our conditions. The important contribution of this method is that it had made possible for the students to get both quantitative and qualitative acquisition of language skills.”

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