NEW APPROACHES OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract: In an increasingly globalized world, proficiency in English has become significant for communication and career advancement. This paper explores innovative methods and approaches of teaching English language to young generation. By examining recent research and practical strategies, this paper aims to provide educators with effective tools to engage and empower young learners in language acquisition. Topics covered include the use of TPR (Total Physical Response), CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), TBLT (Task-based language teaching), CLL (Cooperative or Community Language Learning) and Natural Method. Additionally, this paper discusses the paramount importance of implementing these approaches successfully in the classroom environment.

Key words: Total physical response, Communicative language teaching, Task-based language teaching, Cooperative or Community language learning, Natural Method.

Introduction:

With the growing importance of English proficiency in today's globalized world, the demand for effective language instruction for young learners has never been higher. Recognizing the unique needs and learning styles of young students, educators have continuously sought innovative approaches to teaching English as a second language. This quest has led to the development of new methodologies and techniques tailored specifically to engage and inspire young learners in their language learning journey. In this exploration of new approaches to teaching English to young learners, we delve into the diverse range of innovative methods that have emerged, their theoretical underpinnings, and their practical implications for language instruction in the classroom. By understanding and embracing these new approaches, educators can better equip young learners with the language skills they need to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and multilingual world.

The Importance of English Proficiency for Young Learners:

This section discusses the profound importance of English language proficiency for young learners, including cognitive development, academic success, and future opportunities. It emphasizes the advantages of early language acquisition and the role of educators in facilitating this process. Acquiring English at a young age is crucial as it can provide children with invaluable knowledge for communication in contemporary globalized world. English is considered as a widely spoken language and utilized in various fields such as education, business, politics, and technology. Although teaching English to young learners may present challenges, it is crucial for their language development and overall knowledge. Acquiring English skills early on can open doors for future opportunities, and greatly benefit their careers with long-term prospects. Furthermore, studying English education at a young age helps children overcome language barriers and prepare for advanced levels of schooling. Early English acquisition also enables young generation to stay abreast of international affairs and be ready for the demands of a globalized world.

1. TPR (Total Physical Response)

TPR refers to Total Physical Response, which was created by Dr. James J Asher. Asher developed TPR as a result of his experiences in terms of the observations of young children acquiring their first language (J. Asher, 1969, pp. 3-17). He noticed that interactions between parents and their offspring often took the form of speech from the parent followed by a physical response from the child. Asher made three hypotheses depending on his precise observations. Primarily, the language is learned mainly by listening. Secondly, the language acquisition must engage the right hemisphere of the brain. Thirdly, the process of learning language should not involve any stress. The profound research was conducted in Turkey in 2018 on TPR by Adnan Oflaz demonstrated applying the method can significantly lead to the reduction of anxiety in students. During the process of Oflaz's research of implementing the TPR method for two hours a week over a six-week period, "those pupils whose anxiety levels were high and those who had anxiety very close to high level, went down to medium level. Oflaz also made observations in which the students had more willingness towards speaking in German (which was the target language), that they did not intentionally avoid situations in which they had to speak in the target language, and in this case some students were even "eager to take turns to speak (Adnan Oflaz, 2018, p. 3).

2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for Young Learners:

Communicative language teaching (CLT), or the communicative approach (CA), is an approach to language teaching that focuses on interaction since both the means and the ultimate purpose of study. Learners in classroom environment mainly use communication to acquire and practice the target language by interactions with one another and the teacher. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) prioritizes meaningful communication and interaction in the language learning process. Richards in Jolliffe stated that "Communicative Language Teaching is an approach which refers to a diverse number of principles that reflect a communicative view of language learning and that can be implemented to support a wide range of clasroom procedures" (Richards, 2007, p. 15). There are some learning and teaching techniques that can be used inCommunicative Language Teaching class, for example, role play, information gap, language exchanges, simulation, discussion, game, pair work and group work. All these techniques can engage the learners in communication process. In order to use CLT methods successfully, it requires more than simply placing students into pairs and groups. To quote Felder and Henriquez: "The benefits of the approach are fully realized when the group work is structured to assure such features as positive interdependence, individual accountability, and appropriate uses of teamwork and interpersonal skills"(Felder and Henriquez, 1995, p. 25).

3. TBLT (Task-based language teaching)

Task-based language teaching (TBLT), also referred to as task-based instruction (TBI), emphasizes utilizing real-life language for accomplishing practical tasks in the target language, such as visiting a doctor or conducting interviews. Evaluation primarily centers on task completion rather than strict adherence to language rules, fostering fluency and confidence among learners. Thus, TBLT is seen as a subset of communicative language teaching (CLT). TBLT was originally popularized by N. S. Prabhu (1980s) while working in Bangalore, India, according to Jeremy Harmer. Prabhu noticed that his students could acquire language merely as easily with a non-linguistic problem as when they were

concentrating on linguistic questions. According to Rod Ellis, a task has four main peculiarities (Rod Ellis, 2001, p. 223):

● A task involves a primary emphasize to (pragmatic) meaning.

● A task can have some kind of 'gap'. (Prabhu identified the three main types as information gap, reasoning gap, and opinion gap.)

● The participants select the linguistic resources necessary to fulfil the task.

● A task has clearly defined and non-linguistic consequences.

4. Cooperative/Community Language Learning

Community language learning (CLL) is considered a language-teaching approach that focuses on group-interest learning. It is based on the counselling-approach in which the teacher acts as a counselor and a paraphraser, while the learner is seen as a client and collaborator. The Collaborative Language Learning (CLL) method was formulated by Charles Arthur Curran, a Jesuit clergyman and psychology professor at Loyola University Chicago, who specialized in counseling (1970s). Curran emphasized that counselors assist clients in gaining insight into their issues by grasping the core of their concerns and connecting their emotions to thoughts. This involves comprehending the client's perspective and providing responses that are empathetic yet objective. Community Language Learning (CLL) places importance on fostering a sense of community within the learning group, promoting interaction as a key method of learning, and prioritizing the emotions of students along with acknowledging the challenges in language acquisition. Unlike traditional methods, there is no fixed syllabus or textbook to adhere to; instead, the content of lessons is determined by the students themselves through meaningful conversations where they engage with authentic messages. Notably, CLL integrates translation, transcription, and recording techniques into its approach. It is among the "designer" language acquisition methods that emerged in the 1970s, alongside The Silent Way, Suggestopedia, and Total Physical Response (TPR), constituting part of the Humanistic Approach to language learning. These methodologies diverge from conventional language teaching practices, often associated with a charismatic figure, and originated outside the field of language education. Additionally, they are characterized by strict guidelines and emphasize learners' accountability for their own learning. Charles Curran, an American Jesuit priest, is the founding figure of CLL. His work in Counseling Learning, a broader learning approach rooted in Rogerian counseling principles, laid the foundation for CLL.

5. Natural Method

The Natural Approach, developed by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell in the late 1970s and early 1980s, aims to facilitate language acquisition in a classroom setting by prioritizing naturalistic learning processes. It emphasizes communication over explicit grammar instruction and error correction, striving to create a low-stress learning environment. In this approach, language output is allowed to emerge spontaneously after students have been exposed to ample comprehensible input, a concept central to the method. While closely associated with Krashen's monitor model, there are differences, notably Terrell's belief in the value of some conscious grammar study. The syllabus focuses on activities that promote subconscious language acquisition, including content-based learning, personalization of language through student interests, games, and problem-

solving tasks. The primary goal of the natural approach is to develop communicative skills, particularly targeting beginning learners. It is presented as a flexible set of principles applicable to various teaching contexts, with specific objectives shaped by the situation at hand. Terrell outlines three fundamental principles:

1. Instruction prioritizes communication over linguistic form.

2. Speech production evolves gradually and is never coerced.

3. Early speech progresses through natural stages, from simple responses to complete sentences.

These principles cultivate classrooms where teachers emphasize engaging, understandable input and minimize anxiety-inducing situations. Lessons focus on comprehending messages in the target language, with minimal emphasis on error correction, drilling, or explicit grammar instruction. The approach also underscores building a broad vocabulary foundation over mastering new grammatical structures. Moreover, teachers aim to create intrinsically motivating classroom environments. Although originally developed without a specific theoretical framework, the natural approach to language teaching has become closely associated with Krashen's monitor model, thanks to Terrell's subsequent collaboration with Krashen. Krashen's model comprises five hypotheses:

1. Acquisition-learning hypothesis: Distinguishes between conscious learning and subconscious acquisition of language, suggesting that only acquisition leads to fluent language use.

2. Monitor hypothesis: Proposes that consciously learned language knowledge is used solely for monitoring output, not for generating new language.

3. Input hypothesis: Suggests that language is acquired through exposure to comprehensible input slightly above the learner's current level, termed "i+1" by Krashen.

4. Natural order hypothesis: States that learners acquire grammatical features of a language in a predetermined sequence, unaffected by instruction.

5. Affective filter hypothesis: Asserts that learners must be relaxed and receptive for language acquisition to occur, with nervous or distressed learners potentially missing out on learning opportunities.

Despite its alignment with Krashen's theory, the natural approach deviates from it in some aspects. Terrell, for instance, sees a greater role for conscious grammar learning compared to Krashen. While Krashen's monitor hypothesis suggests that conscious learning doesn't aid in generating new language, Terrell believes some conscious grammar study can be beneficial. The natural approach gained significant popularity among language teachers, particularly those teaching Spanish in the United States. Markee provides four reasons for its success (Markee, 1997, p. 46) . Firstly, he suggests that the method's simplicity made it easy to comprehend, despite the complexity of the underlying research. Secondly, it aligned well with the prevailing understanding of second-language acquisition. Thirdly, Krashen emphasized that teachers should have the freedom to experiment with the method alongside their current classroom practices. Finally, Krashen actively demonstrated the method to numerous teacher groups, allowing them to witness its practical application firsthand (Krashen, 2013, p. 59).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the emergence of new approaches in teaching English to young learners has revolutionized language education, offering innovative methods to enhance learning outcomes effectively. Through methods such as TPR (Total Physical Response), CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), CLL (Community Language Learning), the Natural Approach and Task-based language teachingeducators have shifted towards prioritizing communication, fostering a supportive learning environment, and integrating meaningful activities that cater to the diverse needs of young learners. These approaches, often grounded in contemporary theories of language acquisition, have garnered popularity among teachers for their simplicity, compatibility with current research, and practical applicability in the classroom. As the field continues to evolve, embracing these new approaches presents an exciting opportunity to empower young learners with the language skills they need to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

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