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TEACHING GRAMMAR USING ELT METHODS AND APPROACHES AT HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL IN VELLORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Language learning is a process which involves four skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. One needs to master the grammar part of a language to develop the writing skill. Grammar is a difficult task to the Teachers those who teach English as a second language. Teachers take utmost care while handling the grammar in the place where English is taught and learnt as a second language. The learners, who are from higher secondary schools in Vellore district, travel through Tamil medium feel bored when the grammar is taught in Direct Method. Given below are the various ELT methods and approaches that help the English Teachers choose the apt method in teaching grammar. The teachers must be clear with the methods and their shortcomings so that they can decide which method is suitable for second language classrooms at higher secondary level. The findings must be helpful to the Teachers who teach English as a second language at higher secondary level. This study has been done with questionnaire and a brief interview.

KEYWORDS:

Four skills-ELT Methods & Approaches – English as second language –learners from Tamil medium- higher secondary level.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English Grammar to Second Language learners at the higher secondary level needs proper attention and care. Several significant methods and approaches are available in English Language Teaching. The teachers of English from Vellore district follow many methods and approaches to enhance students' writing skill. They take utmost care in promoting the second language learners at higher secondary level. This study brings forth various methods of ELT are discussed below.

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STUDY PURPOSE

This study aims to find out the proper method or approach in teaching grammar at higher secondary level in Vellore district. It also brings forth the difficulties faced by the teachers of English from Vellore district.

LITERATURE REVIEW

GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD

Grammar Translation Method, which is the oldest method in teaching of English, is done through the mother tongue. In the beginning this method had a great welcome in teaching English as a foreign language. The teacher has to translate each and everything i.e. to say all the words, phrases and clauses and sentences in mother language. The primary goal of this method is to enhance the learners to master the second language with the reading and writing skills. The learners have to memorise the rules of grammar and to apply them in exercises. There rise comparisons of English language and Mother tongue.

This translation method gives a room for the interpretation of the words and phrases of English language. It insists learning of rules of Grammar of the target language. It paves a way that suits in teaching large classes though the resources are limited. The learners are advised to listen to the teaching, copy the rules and even asked to do exercises and correct them on the blackboard. For this method the teachers need not be very competent in the second language. All that the teacher expected to do is to follow the text carefully and explain it using students' mother tongue.

DIRECT METHOD

Webster's New International Dictionary states "Direct Method is a method of teaching a foreign language, especially a modern language, through conversation, discussion and reading in the language itself, without use of the pupil's language, without translation, without the study of formal grammar. The first words are taught by pointing to objects or pictures or by performing actions".

The Direct Method aims at making the students think directly in English. This is a natural method and it provides more oral training to the learners. It tries to establish a direct bond between experience and expression. This method avoids the tendency to think in and the use of mother tongue. The grammar part is taught by using an inductive approach. It also provides many activities in learning grammar so that the learners feel very interesting and exciting. Without using the mother tongue the learners express their thoughts in target language. There are plenty of chances to develop speaking skill.

This method does not hold its effects in the case of learners of higher secondary level where the translation method is necessary. Since it gives more importance to speaking it neglects writing skill. The teacher must be efficient in teaching direct method. The short coming of this method is the overcrowded class. Since the classes are overcrowded the teachers cannot concentrate on the slow learners. The late bloomers will not shine during the oral activities. The uses of idioms and phrases make turmoil in the minds of average students.

STRUCTURAL APPROACH

Structural Approach presents 'what to teach' instead of 'how to teach'. This approach gives

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more importance to master the structures. There are four types of structures in English language: sentence patterns, formulae, phrase patterns and idioms. This method concentrates on the teaching of sentence patterns and structural words and gives importance to speech, activity, mastering the structure, concentrating single item at a time and situational teaching. The prime principle of this approach is speech. It is usually connected with the oral approach and the situational approach. It is linked with the repetitive drill method. The teacher has to use his intelligence in choosing suitable situations for various classes of students at different stages of their learning English. The teachers must keep in mind that language is primarily speech. Learning a language means acquiring a set of habits. The teachers have to the target language and not about the language and they have to make the learners as active participants. Since this method gives importance to speaking skill, it ignores reading and writing skills. This method is not suited for the students at higher secondary level.

BILINGUAL METHOD

The name Bilingual method itself suggests that this method makes use of two languages: the target language and the mother tongue. In this method the teacher can use the mother tongue for a limited purpose. He gives more pattern practice to the students. Even an average teacher of English can be successful in this method. It helps the students speak in the target language fluently and accurately. Words and sentences of the target language are presented with equivalents in the mother tongue. Grammar part of the target language is explained through the mother tongue. The students are never given chance to say anything in their mother tongue. Since there is no need to create situations the teacher saves a lot of time. Thus he gets adequate and enough time for practicing the second language in reading and writing.

COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

Language is used as a tool in communication. Communication approach enables the students to convey and interpret messages. Since it is a learner centred approach, the students learn the grammatical competence and also they can know the social skill. This approach stresses fluency, accuracy and appropriateness. The role of teacher in this approach is that of a co participant. He helps the students take part in the language tasks given.

METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR

In English Language two methods are available in teaching grammar part and they are Deductive Method and Inductive Method.

1. Deductive Method

In this method, the teacher gives instructions first, explain the grammatical concepts in detail and then he makes the students apply the rules in the given tasks. It is necessary that the teacher and the students have to recite the grammar rules. This method of teaching grammar comes under the teacher centered approach. This method may be used for higher secondary students those are already familiar with the language.

2. Inductive Method

In this method, the teacher gives many examples first so that the students understand and

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recognize the grammar rules behind the examples given in a natural way. In this way the students are presented with lots of examples first and rules later and thus this method makes the students take part in the learning process. Since this method is learner centred the teacher must be competent enough to use this method. This method can be the right method for the beginners of the second language.

METHOD AND PARTICIPANTS

This study presents the method used and difficulties faced by the teachers while teaching grammar to the second language learners at Higher Secondary level. The method involved in this study was quantitative data collection.

The participants of the study were Post Graduate Assistants in English from Higher Secondary Schools of different areas (including urban and rural areas) in Vellore District. They had teaching experience from five years to fifteen years.

THE INSTRUMENT USED

The data were collected using questionnaire survey and interview. The questionnaire was sent to Teachers through electronic media and a brief interview was conducted thus. Ten English Language Teachers from different areas of Vellore District were involved in this process.

RESULT ANALYSIS

The first question was framed to get the detail of Teachers' interest level in teaching English to Tamil Medium students. 70 % of Teachers answered that they were very much interested in it and the rest were interested but none answered negatively. The table given below brings the rest of the analysis.

S.No	Question Asked	Teachers' Responses		
1.	Interested in teaching	Yes - 30%	No - 0%	Yes, very much – 70%
2.	Method chosen to teach	Direct Method – 10%	Grammar Translated Method – 10%	Bilingual Method – 80%
3.	Students' learning talent in Direct Method	Yes – 0%	No – 100 %	Very poor – 0%
4.	The conditions of First Year students	They come with basic Grammar – 10%	They are zero in Grammar – 0%	Hr Sec Teachers teach basics – 90%
5.	Methods & Approaches known to Teachers	Yes – 30%	Not all – 30%	No comments – 40%
6.	Need more periods to teach Grammar	Yes – 90%	No – 0%	Allotted is enough – 10%
7.	Frequent tests create anxiety in students' mind	Yes – 0%	No – 10%	Some extent – 90%
8.	Teachers' preference to	Quality – 10%	Quantity – 0%	Both – 90%
9.	For learning	Minimizing the no. of students – 30%	Increasing the time span – 70%	Need more training to Teachers – 0%
10.	Which skills given importance	LSRW Skills-100	Speaking – 0%	Writing – 0%

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers should select a method which is a combination of all the best suited Methods and Approaches.
2. There is need for reduction of frequent tests since they create they create anxiety in learners' mind.
3. Time span for the teaching of Grammar should be raised.
4. The Teacher and the Students ratio level in Grammar classes at Higher Secondary Level should be minimised.

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