



Research Paper

## Non-Native Speakers and Teaching of English Language

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### Abstract

English is taught all over the world under many different circumstances. English is a language with great reach and influence. In English speaking countries, English language teaching has essentially evolved in two broad directions. First as instruction for people who intend to live in an English speaking country and second for those who don't. English Language and Literature teaching practice often assumes that most of the difficulties that learners face in the study of English are a consequence of the degree to which their native language differs from English. There are many errors which any learner faces like inappropriate grammatical patterns, pronunciation of certain sounds incorrectly or with difficulty, confusing items of vocabulary. There are some more critical problems which are faced by the teachers like lack of motivation, insufficient time, resources and materials, attitudes of educational managers and most important the right methods of teaching. In this paper, I have tried to find out a few methods which may be proven right and fruitful in English teaching.

**Key words:** Essentially evolved, instruction, native language, errors, methods.

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### I. Introduction:

What is communication? If we are asked this question, then our reply would be that communication is an exchange of expressions. In this exchange, one medium is there which is adopted by the human beings, and that is the medium of language. For this purpose, human beings adopt a set of sound, produced through the oral track, written symbols and gestures. This combination, which is very systematic is called language.

### An Overview of the History of Language Teaching Methods:

It is a general notion among people that the scope of language is restricted to verbal communication alone. But non-verbal communication is also a part of language. It is a known fact that different languages are spoken in all around the world. English has become almost the "Second language" or the "Target language" of the world, but it needs to be stated that there could be dissimilarities among the English spoken in different parts of the world.

According to John Lock, "Languages are not rule bound, and 'forms' are attained only by chance". He said that language teaching is possible only through imitation and repetition.

After few years of this idea of John Lock some scholars found that only imitation and repetition is not needed for language teaching but there should be some change in the process of language teaching methodology and on the grammatical principles. Methods of translation was considered best in 19<sup>th</sup> century. There came an opinion of scholars that grammar could be learnt indirectly through reading. However, as the language adopted in the books happens to be literary in nature, people have started experiencing difficulty in learning the language for common purposes. For this difficulty, a solution came that the use of simple and smaller sentences should be adequate to understand the grammatical principles. Two things were found necessary for language instruction:

1. Principles of grammar and vocabulary
2. A few sentences for translation.

A scholar named D. Marinus said that for the purpose of teaching and learning English language, mere grammar is not sufficient. So, for the meaningful and purposeful grammar teaching and learning, free methodology should be adopted. In the support of Marinus, Montaigne also accepted that he had never adopted

either the grammar or its rules, and he admitted that for successful teaching and learning language atmosphere is very essential.

In the beginning, it was accepted that language teaching could be made possible by grammar and its principles. Later on the idea emerged that English language teaching could be very effective if the scope of grammar and its rules may remain limited and minimal.

In this view, the importance of native language / mother tongue had been felt. In the context of second language instruction, which involves memorising the grammatical principles, classification of vocabulary (into two different categories of grammar and making use of the grammatical principles through translation); few scholars argued that translation and grammatical writings should only be understood through listening and reading. Subsequently, it was advised that the process of speaking and writing should also be developed. It was for the first time that for the development of English language for non native speakers, instruction was viewed, and not the grammar and grammatical principles. And it could be only possible by developing various language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing.

### **Development of Various Teaching Methods:**

In the year 1874, a scholar Hennes established a school for language teaching and proposing a natural method for language instruction. After a few years of this school “Direct Method” of language instruction and its wider applications were attempted.

Simultaneously, another school of thought emerged that the phonetic and phonological descriptions of the target language would prove to be very useful in the second and other language instructions.

Now, because there were many scholars who were applying various rules and propounding new theories, many problems were also emerging apart from lack of proper and sufficient knowledge of English language teaching methods. In this work-line many unsystematic and unplanned procedures were also adopted. For English language instructions “Direct Method” did not prove to be satisfactorily functioning. English language instructors not being the native speakers of Target language resulted in engaging a native speaker of the target language as an informant in language instructions. Thus, detailed investigation and research started in this area.

After many years till the time of II World War no formal English language teaching had started in the schools because of the various reasons. But a dire and acute need was felt for learning various languages for the development and promotion of trade and business. This need resulted in finding new avenues for learning second languages simultaneously with the native languages in the schools. So, by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, a considerable number of language teaching methods emerged. Language specialist and language teaching methodology experts expressed different views regarding the number of language teaching methods. Some scholars like William Mckey had gone to the extent of saying that there are as many as 54 methods of language teaching. Among these 54 methods, 10 - 12 methods became popular and actively used. These methods are:

1. Direct
2. Phonetic or oral
3. Reading
4. Grammar
5. Translation
6. Grammar - translation
7. Audio – lingual
8. Conversational
9. Situational.
10. Bilingual
11. Natural
12. Electric.

Now, a large number of teaching methods had emerged, but an important work was left to do for the teachers and that was how to devise instant strategies and methods which suit the learners.

Here, it could be said that the prime and essential requirement of meaningful and effective language instruction is the equal participation of the instructor and the learner. So, it is useless to discuss about various components of a language lesson and its details.

As the language teaching method is normally initiated with the development of spoken skills, which leads the learners towards the development of writing skills. It is overall an active communication and interaction activity between the teacher and the taught. For the active participation of the learner, the topics and themes of the

lessons should be based on the aspects and situations of daily life, so that the learner can actively make use of the language in daily real life situations and can meaningfully interact with the native speakers of the target language.

“Gradation” is a very significant part of planning the instructional program. Preparing the instructional material and carrying out the actual process of instruction have made the process of gradation easy. In this process, a large lesson consists of the following components:

1. A brief introduction of the theme dealt with
2. New and difficult vocabulary items with glossary
3. The main text
4. Grammatical notes
5. Cultural notes
6. Drills for oral Practice
7. Exercise for written practice

It is proposed to deal with the methods and exercises relating to language instructions. The difference between methods and exercises is that of the medium in which the methods are administered. Oral methods are administered for the development of spoken skills; and exercises are administered through the written medium for the development of written skills.

Language teaching methods, drills and exercises are primarily divided into 3 categories:

1. Mechanical
2. Manipulative
3. Communicative

**Mechanical Methods** are those where there is no independent exercise required to be made on the part of the learners. The task involved in these methods and exercises is a close observation of the stimulus provided by the teacher, exact imitation and identical reproduction of the stimulus which forms the response on the part of the learners. Such methods could be at all the levels of the language descriptions viz. the sound, the word, the sentence, etc. While the basic format of the mechanical method is a stimulus and response, an extended form to those methods is also given by adding some more dimensions as follows:

- A. Stimulus (Teacher)
- B. Response 1 (learner)
- C. Second stimulus (Teacher - for enabling the learners to compare their first response with the initial stimulus and rectify the mistakes (if any))
- D. Response 2 (Accurate and exact reproduction of the stimulus)

Thus, the mechanical methods can be either two faced or three faced or even four faced. Search methods and exercises which are designed at the level of a structure or language pattern are called “pattern/structural methods”.

There are four important aspects to be remembered with reference to such structural methods. They are:

- (1) One and only problem should be attempted at a time. In other words, only one structure would be dealt with one.
- (2) Structural methods do not teach a morphological or sentence structure by itself. They provide practice in a complex structure in which the phonological, morphological, and syntactic components exist.
- (3) A structural method should be systematic in such a way that it creates and develops habits without the conscious knowledge of the learner.
- (4) The selected structural method must help the learner in sustaining their interest and motivation in learning besides enhancing the maturity level of the learners. These methods must necessarily be related to the content and adequate support and guidance needs to be provided to the learners for internalizing the structures.

**Manipulative Methods** are those which demand a certain degree of independent activity on part of the learners. This independent activity depends upon the instructions and guidelines provided in the instructional material or by the teacher indicating as to what is expected from the learners. These methods involve a clear and essential understanding and comprehension of the stimulus provided so as to ensure appropriate and accurate responses,

with the necessary manipulations indicated in the instructions. Needless to say that comprehension refers to both vocabulary and structure involved.

The main difference between manipulative and communicative method is with reference to the learner's ability to manipulate and use the language structure and the vocabulary in novel situations. The communicative methods involve the learner's ability to independently make use of the language, structures and vocabulary in known and unknown context and situations. On the other hand, manipulative methods do not involve the independent use of the vocabulary and structures. A large variety of methods and exercises are talked about in the context of English language instruction. They can be broadly classified into 10-12 categories. They are as follows:

1. Repetition
  - a. Verbatim repetition
  - b. Open ended repetition
  
2. Substitution
  - a. Simple substitution / single slot substitution
  - b. Substitution in various slots / mixed slots
  - c. Substitution that forces a change in the structure
  - d. Substitution that calls for a change in the cue.
  - e. Multiple slot substitution
  - f. Progressive substitution/moving slot substitution
3. Expansion Method
4. Addition Method
5. Sentence Formation Method
6. Fixed Increment Method
7. Completion Method
8. Transformation Method
9. Transformation Combination Method
10. Translation Method
11. Question and Answer Method
  - a. *questions with affirmative answers*
  - b. *questions with negative answers*
  - c. *questions eliciting alternative answers*
  - d. *guided comment on reply method*
  - e. *simple response questions / Verbal questions*
12. Replacement Method

Although, ideally speaking, it is desirable for the specialized language instructor to know in detail about all types of methods, the process of construction, etc. These types of methods which are considered important for an English language instructor, would be discussed below.

**Repetition Method:** Task involved in the repetition method may be of two phased, three phased or even four phased. This method is based on a stimulus-response theory. The role of the language instructor and the language learner would be almost same in the degree. Initially, the teachable item (at any level of language description) would be presented by the teacher with instructions to the learners that they must very carefully observe all the elements contained in the stimulus and make an attempt to repeat making their utterance resemble the stimulus provided by the teacher as closely as possible.

Consequently, in a three phased method, the teacher repeats the stimulus item again immediately after the learner's response so as to facilitate them to compare their responses with those of the teacher and try to rectify the deviations, if any, between the stimulus and response. The four phased method provides, in addition, another opportunity for the learner to make a perfect and ideal repetition of the stimulus.

The process involved in this type of method as mechanical and no independent activity what so ever is expected from the learner. Therefore, it is categorized as a mechanical method. When such an exercise involved through the written medium, particularly with reference to the formation of letters, development of expressions of higher levels also forms part of the mechanical exercise. In this case, the medium being written, the task is labelled as repetition exercise.

**Substitutional Method:** This may be of both types mechanical and manipulative. It becomes a mechanical method when the items given for substitution belong to one slot in an utterance and the items for substitution in the particular slot are provided by the instructor himself. That is to say that the learner is made to know the place of substitution in a given response, its grammatical category, and a list of suitable words that can be filled in the specific slot without affecting any change in the cues.

The only exercise expected from the learner is to make use of the words given separately in the identified place in the basic responses. On the other hand, if the place of substitution is not identified by the teacher and the grammatical category of the item that should be substituted is not made known, the task of the learner becomes a little different and some kind of independent effort is expected from the learners. The task of identifying the grammatical category and in the event of the words given belonging to different grammatical categories, the possibility of their substitution at different places / slots would have to be made out by the learners. Thus, certain degree and some kind of manipulation is anticipated from the learners. Therefore, such a method involving these aspects can be called manipulative substitution method.

Substitution methods can be subcategorized into following:

1. Single slot substitution
2. Multiple slots substitution
3. Moving slot substitution
4. Mixed slot substitution

**Single slot substitution** is purely mechanical in nature, and the only exercise involved on the part of the learner is to substitute one item at a time fitting into the same place in the basic response.

**Multiple slot substitution** involves simultaneous substitution of two or more words indicated by the teacher at a time in the basic sentence given.

**Moving slot substitution** involves substitution of words belonging to different categories and occurring in different places in a sequence either from left to right or right to left in sequence.

**Mixed slot substitution** involves the substitution of one item at a time, but the place for substitution takes place in a disorderly manner.

The kinds of substitution methods indicated above are mechanical in nature. They could be manipulated by giving the words for substitution belonging to different tenses and other structure words whereby, in the process of substitution certain degree of manipulation in the responses will have to be made by the learners to make the resultant responses grammatically acceptable. Such methods may become manipulative substitution.

**Expansion Method:** Expansion method provides the learners with an idea about the word order in a grammatical sentence in the concerned language. Further, these methods would also enable the learners as to how to build up different syntactic sentences. The teacher provides one word after the other, and the learner is expected to add all these words in the same order so that a meaningful and grammatically acceptable utterance may result in the language concerned.

**Transformation Method:** As the very name of this method indicates, the exercise involved is to convert the basic response into different patterns, like a statement to question, a statement to affirmative or interrogative, interrogative to affirmative, affirmative to negative etc.

**Matching Method:** In this type of exercises, two sets of expressions are given in two different columns, like column (a) column (b). One expression, chosen from each of the two columns have to be put together to form grammatically acceptable combination. In order to accomplish such acceptable combination of one response each from the two columns, the corresponding expressions are not given in the same order, but they are mixed up. Therefore, the learner has to make a search of the corresponding expression and match them by their respective meaning. On the other hand, it is also possible that the learner could make out the acceptable grammatical combinations of the items from column (a) and column (b) and put them together separately. Matching of items can be either indicated by the arrows or the suitable combination can also be indicated.

**Sentence Formation Methods:** These methods involve providing a kind of chart consisting of a number of words by making use of which, the learners have to form sentences choosing the items from the different frames in the chart. A number of sentences could be generated by choosing words from each frame.

**The Completion Method:** It involves providing the basic sentences with a blank which is expected to be filled in with suitable words by the learner to make sensible and complete grammatical sentence.

**Question-Answer Method:** This method cannot be labelled as a method or exercise in the real sense. Many scholars prefer to call this a response method. This involves posing a question by the instructor, anticipating grammatically and semantically acceptable responses from the learners.

In the context of administering methods and exercises, certain precautions have to be taken by the teachers so as to ensure a higher degree of effectiveness in the process of learning. Following are the certain precautions and suggestions for the teachers making use of methods and exercises in language instructions:

1. Before applying the method, the learners should be explained the aim of the method and the procedure to be followed.
2. The items in the method should be short.
3. A system of hand signals (to start, to stop, to repeat, to repeat again, etc.) may be used so that the teacher's instructions to start, stop, repeat etc. may not interfere with the stimulus and the responses.
4. Teacher should follow the response carefully and should give correct responses for reinforcement immediately after each of the learner's responses.
5. Besides scores methods, individual response method should also be administered which helps the teacher to locate individual learner's problems.
6. It is essential that all the learners should be involved in repeating the response in chorus method. None should be ignored.
7. The teacher must be very careful in applying the methods. The sentences produced by administering the method may be grammatical but they may not be semantically acceptable. This kind of confusion should be avoided by the teacher, especially in substitution method.
8. The teacher should use normal speech in terms of speed, stress, intonation, etc. If he slows down or speeds up, it may not only distort the intonation, but also the meaning as a whole. As a result, the learners may not be capable of understanding normal native speaker's speech in the target language. Slowing down or speeding up and unnatural pause will confuse the learners.
9. The teacher should minimize the use of languages other than the TL (target language) in the administration of methods and exercises.
10. The teacher should produce a fresh sentence after every learner, so that the learners should not imitate each other. The teacher should repeat once again after each learner, so that the correct version may be established as the last impression.
11. The teacher should not show partiality to any of the learners. He should tell them that what he expects is superior performance from each other.
12. The teacher should neither concentrate on the weaker learners ignoring the better ones, nor should he pay more attention to the better ones.
13. The teacher should stick to the vocabulary range of the learners at any one time.
14. Holding the attention of the class is very important. So, the teacher should -
  - a. Surprise the learners by changing the order of calling on the learners.
  - b. Name the learners after the question.
  - c. If a learner misses a question, the teacher should provide the answer to that question and should ask a different question to another learner.
  - d. The teacher should repeat the question/sentence if the learner finds any difficulty. He should ask the learners to close the text when the basic sentences are introduced in the class. It is very important that they concentrate on the sounds also.
15. The teacher should not make a learner repeat more than three times at any time, if the teacher is still dissatisfied, he may come back again to the same learner later.
16. The teacher should not imitate the learner's mispronunciation and he should never exaggerate or ridicule the learners' mistake. The best way to correct is to repeat the item. The simplest way to express dissatisfaction is to ask the learner to repeat again. It is very important that the learners use the learned structures in communicating in an unanticipated context. So, the teacher should give a chance to the learners to use what has been learned. Thus, the main method should be made in such a way that the learner can use them.
17. More often than not, boredom is due to the teacher. So, the teacher should not blame the class if it appears to be bored. On the contrary, he should try to eliminate the element of drudgery from the classroom teaching.
18. The teacher should always remember that his business is to teach and not just to humor the class.
19. The teacher should move deliberately from one place to another in order to ensure learners' attention.

20. The teacher should use some gestures, which may include the movements of head, hand and body to direct attention to emphasize importance, to express emotions, etc.

21. The teacher may use verbal and non-verbal reinforcers. Verbal reinforcers include expressions like -- good, excellent, come on, think, etc., and also repetition and rephrasing of learner's response which reinforces their behavior positively and encourage them to participate. Non-verbal reinforcers include nodding, smiling, moving towards responding learners carefully observing the responses and encouraging them to participate.

22. The teacher should use positive reinforcers which strengthen desirable responses of the learners and if he uses negative reinforcers, it weakens or negatively reinforces the responses of the learners. The positive reinforcement includes non-verbal cues. Like nodding, smiling, looking attentively at responding students, etc., and verbal reinforcers, like yes, excellent, repeat, rephrase and response of the learners, etc. The negative reinforcement includes telling the learner directly and his answer is wrong and passing sarcastic remarks and non-verbal reinforcement like frowning, staring, looking angrily at the responding learner.

## **II. Conclusion:**

In spite of all the efforts and applying all the methods for the last many years, our teachers and instructors are still struggling with the problem. Although the researches and the theories propounded by the scholars working in this field have been proved as a milestone. On the basis of their theories everyday something new comes out. The purpose of this all is how to find the right and easy methods to teach English the non-native speakers. The present paper aims to provide few ways to overcome the universal problems occurring in teaching of English language to non-native speakers.

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