

PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LANGUAGE TEACHING SOFTWARE

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Abstract

Language means system of sounds, words, patterns used by humans to communicate their thoughts and feelings. So, language is the source of expression of thought by means of speech sounds. It is the most powerful, convenient and permanent means and form of communication. Language teaching is a process by which an individual acquires some communicative competence or fluency in a language. It involves a teacher who facilitates the practice of language for the learners. The purpose of language teaching is to facilitate students to gain ownership of the diverse social practices. Language teaching involves a teacher who facilitates the practice of language for the learners. The practice is more than just teaching has to be effective. Teaching a language, whether first or second is important if the teaching involves a teacher who facilitates the practice of language for the learners. The practice is more than just teaching a description of it. Teaching in this digital age involves developing the ability to use the language using language teaching software. This is applicable for both first and second language learners. Language teaching software are considered to be the shift from focusing on teachers and teaching to learners and learning. It is on this premise that this paper is written.

Key Words: Language, Teaching, Andragogy, Pedagogy, Principles, Methods, Software

Introduction

Language according to Sumague (2010), is an organization of sounds, of vocal symbols, the sounds some message. Speech is primary to writing but there are several languages in the world which have no writing systems but it enjoys the status of languages because they are spoken. Music and singing are vocal sounds but they are not languages. Language is also a means of communication non-linguistic symbols such as signals of various kinds, traffic lights, road signs, and flags are also means of communication, but language is the best means of self-expression. With the help of language human beings express their thoughts, desires, emotions, feelings, happiness, sadness then human beings store knowledge, transmit messages, transfer of knowledge and experience from one person to another, from one place to another place, from one generation to another generation. It is language which links present, past and future together. Human beings express their thoughts, feelings and knowledge through language.

Language is the first source of communication. For better communication system it is necessary that language should be used in a good manner. Language has to play a good role in mass communication. With the help of language human beings interact with each other. Language is a means of nourishing and developing culture and establishing human relation. From the birth of human being the evolution of language was started. Man feels the necessity of language from the very first day. It is worthwhile to mention here if a language is not used in any society, it dies out and on the other hand if language is used in society, it's alive.

Language teaching came into its own as a profession in the twentieth century. The basic foundation of contemporary language teaching was developed during the early part of the twentieth century, as applied linguists and others sought to develop principles and procedures for the design of teaching methods and materials, drawing on the developing fields of linguistics and psychology to support a succession of proposals for what were thought to be more effective and theoretically sound teaching methods (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Leavis' view (2014), language teaching is a process by which an individual acquires some communicative competence or fluency in a language. Language teaching involves a teacher who facilitates the practice of language for the learners. The practice is important if the teaching has to be effective. At times, language teaching can end up as memorization of vocabulary and application of grammar rules. This method is less effective and not desirable. The practice is the key to overcome this challenge.

Leavis (2012) grouped teaching into two aspects: **andragogy and pedagogy**. Andragogy refers to teaching the adults and pedagogy refers to teaching children. The approach for teaching children varies from those used for adults. This is because adults apply their learnings to prior experience. Children, on the other hand, are formulating experiences as a part of language acquisition process. Language teaching is concerned with individual studies in a given language, which may or may not be their native language. It generally includes developing all the four skills, namely spoken, written, and reading. Language teaching is mainly dependent on the learner and not on language or other factors. For example, teaching of English could be as a second language or as a Foreign Language. In either case, linguistics is only one aspect of the study. Sometimes, students learn language for surviving, in which case literature may not be the focus of teaching. In the modern language study, business as well as technical language is needed in professionalisms like nursing, medicine, engineering etc.

Language teaching can take various forms like classroom teaching or online. The online teaching may show live videos or stream recorded ones. It could be in the form of standalone course or could involve study materials, sound files and other combinations. Teachers may deliver a predefined curriculum which is designed and

developed by some experts. The teachers may develop the curriculum themselves. Even, when following a "canned curriculum" some improvisations are necessary for effective learning. Language is a separate subject and a part of school education. The curriculum aims at teaching the target language and making the learner understand the link between language and culture.

The purpose of language teaching in basic education is to facilitate students to own ownership of the diverse social practices. The students should be able to use language effectively in life. The students have to be taught to use language to organize their thought, to deliberate, to evaluate and resolve issues and so that they can access their current and past cultural expressions. Besides, the students should be able to understand the contribution of language in knowledge building and cultural values. They should be able to adopt an analytical and responsible attitude towards the challenges that the world is encountering.

Teaching a second language or foreign language refers to teaching a non-native language to students. Second language could be taught within the school system or privately in language schools or home tutor. People feel the need to learn a foreign language due to various reasons. Some of them may have immigrated to a different country also need to acquire a knowledge of the local language. Others may want to enhance their professional career. Moreover, there are various benefits associated with second language acquisition.

History of Language Teaching

Review of history of language teaching is important for understanding the context of contemporary methods. From the historical perspective it is evident that the issues that led to the evolution of the modern methods are those that were always the centre of discussion on how to impart knowledge of foreign language. Harmer (2014) noted that evolution of language teaching techniques over the course of time are evidence to changes in the proficiency language learners need. For example, learners have to achieve oral fluency beyond just reading comprehension as the objective of their learning. Their change also indicates the evolution of theories of the nature of language and language learning. There are many issues to present in language teaching which is not new. Today's controversies reflect contemporary responses to questions that have been asked often throughout the history of language teaching. In the eighteenth century, modern language began to be included in the curriculum of European schools. The techniques that were used were similar to the ones used in teaching Latin. The textbooks mainly comprised of statements of list of vocabulary, grammar rules and translation of sentences. Speaking a foreign language was not the main objective, rather it was limited to reading comprehension aloud. The sentences were constructed only to explain grammatical rules. It has little relevance to the language used for communication in real life. By nineteenth century, the method that was used to teach Latin was adopted for teaching other languages as well in

school. In the mid-nineteenth century, study material mainly comprised of lessons that was devised around grammar rules. The rules of grammar were explained and illustrated using sentences. Nineteenth-century textbook compilers were mainly determined to codify the foreign language into frozen rules of morphology and syntax to be explained and eventually memorized. Oral fluency was not given importance. Only a few written exercises were included randomly as an explanation to the rules. This approach came to be known as Grammar translation method.

General Principles of Language Teaching

In the general principles of language teaching, Lee and Rodgers (2010) highlighted the following principles:

1. Learning is more important than teaching

The conscientious teacher is concerned to teach well. The single most important factor to remember, however, is that teaching is not the terminal objective of what happens in the classroom. In the end, it is changes in the students' behaviour upon which success and failure depend.

The ultimate test of "a good lesson" is not how the teacher performed but whether the students learned. Teachers who are constantly pre-occupied by their own role; what they should be doing, and what their students think of them are making a serious mistake. The most important role of the teacher is that of catalyst — they help to make things happen, but the purpose is activating the students. Some teachers have taught the same lessons in the same way for years out of laziness or inflexibility; other teachers make a more subtle mistake — they constantly look for "the method". Such teachers believe that there is 'a best' way of doing something and, having found the method they consider best, they follow it strictly and carefully. We do not believe that such a method exists. Language is complex, and language teaching is correspondingly complex. It is difficult to make any statement which is always true about language teaching. Different situations call for different materials, different methods, different activities, and different strategies. The main principle for teachers to remember, however, in deciding on the suitability of an approach or method is whether it will be helpful to their particular students in that class. Will it help the students to achieve their objectives? If it does that, the teacher will also have succeeded. Although it is not always possible for teachers working within the state system to follow this principle completely, it is clear that if the syllabus, book, or teacher are more important than the students, something serious is wrong.

2. Teach the students, not the book

Few teachers have the time or opportunity to design their own courses. In the majority of cases a basic textbook is chosen and it is this which provides

the practical classroom syllabus. Inevitably, teachers tend to follow the book deciding in advance how long they can spend on each unit so that they will finish the book in a certain time. But the object of the course is to teach the students, not finish the book! It may be necessary to prepare additional practices on particular points; it may be necessary to go back and study again a unit which has caused particular difficulties and, most important of all, it may be necessary to abandon the day's lesson plan because students raise difficulties which neither the teacher nor the book has foreseen. The principle is that if, at any point during the lesson, the teacher's pre-arranged plan and the students' needs are in conflict, it is the students' needs which should have priority.

3. Involve students in the learning process

Some foreign language students, particularly adults, are learning the language for very specific reasons; others, particularly those learning in a State school system, are doing English because it is part of the system. In all cases, however, students are more likely to enjoy the subject, and to succeed at it, if they are involved in the learning process and, as far as possible, have a chance to influence what happens, and how it happens. It is almost invariably a good idea to begin a new course by discussing with students why they are studying English, what uses they see for the English they learn, and something of their expectations of what they expect to happen in the classroom. It also helps to discuss what students expect to enjoy, and not enjoy. The discussion should be as practical as possible.

4. Don't tell students what they can tell you

Most language teachers talk too much. Again, it is important to remember that the primary objective of the course is to improve the students' language, and to present them with opportunities for productive practice (or carefully controlled listening practice). There are many opportunities in a typical lesson for eliciting knowledge and information from the students rather than simply telling them it: a. If the work of one day is an extension of something from a previous lesson, students should be reminded of the previous lesson, but by the teacher questioning the students, not telling. Examples of this are if a continuous story is being read, students should be asked to summarise the story so far, or, if a language point is being re-studied, it should be introduced with questions rather than teacher presentation. b. After studying a text, instead of explaining words, ask definition questions.

c. Make a habit of asking students to contribute alternative language of their own for example, another phrase which is functionally equivalent, synonyms, or associated vocabulary items. Word roses and word ladders can

be helpful in ensuring that the students provide some of the linguistic input for a lesson.

d. Students can also be encouraged to provide some of the content of a lesson using, for example, the positive/negative technique. The student's language may be limited but this does not mean the student is unintelligent. Too often teachers, particularly native teachers, treat students whose linguistic level is low as if they were generally less able. This mistaken assumption can be particularly unfortunate in the case of a well-qualified middle-aged businessman. Such students not unreasonably expect to be treated as intelligent and capable adults and resent materials or teachers that patronise them. On a more general level it is not unusual for teachers to explain at length only for a member of the class to say We've already done that, or, in the case of a native speaker the explanation is greeted by We've got the same word in (Igbo). Annoying as this may be, teachers bring such difficulties on themselves. Allowing students to contribute in this way is not just a gimmick. Firstly, it provides students with more opportunities to say something (and keeps the teacher correspondingly quiet!). It also constantly provides the teacher with an idea of the students' previous knowledge and understanding, and reveals misunderstandings which may need to be cleared up before new work is introduced. The principle is to base your teaching on eliciting rather than instructing. Such an approach reflects accurately the roles of teacher and student in a classroom which emphasises that learning is more important than teaching.

5. Show your reactions to what students say

Part of exploiting real events involves reacting naturally to what students say, both in exercises and in free conversation. Look at this example:

T So, have you seen "The Sound of Music"?

S1 Yes, but only on television.

T And what about you?

S2 No, I don't like musicals.

T Oh, don't you? Have you seen it, S3?

S3 Yes I have — 18 times.

T Yes, and what about you, S4?

The teacher's response to S2 is good — it is natural and gives the students a chance to notice a typical feature of active listening (Oh, don't you?). The teacher's reaction to S3, however, is a disaster for two important reasons: a. A teacher could only react so automatically if he or she was not listening. Realising that you are not listening has a strong demotivating effect on students. b. The teacher missed a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate in a

natural context the intonation appropriate to expressing surprise (18 times: What on earth for?). If you are surprised, shocked, curious, doubtful, etc. make sure you show it in your general reaction, in what you say, and in how you say it. Encourage other students to show their reactions too. Such reacting develops an important language skill — the active role of the listener in a conversation — and makes both the language and your lessons more alive for students.

6. Students need practice, not you

There are many ways in which it is possible for the teacher to dominate the classroom linguistically in ways which are quite unnecessary. The more the teacher talks, the less opportunity the students have to speak, but it is the students who need the practice! Teachers should beware of all of the following: a. Explaining when they don't need to. b. Repeating themselves unnecessarily (for example, when asking a question). c. Answering for students, without waiting long enough. d. Correcting too much and too quickly. e. Talking about something which interests them, but not necessarily their students. f. Talking unnecessarily about the process of the lesson (see page 44). It is not, however, sufficient for the teacher to avoid unnecessary talk. If the main classroom activity consists of the teacher asking questions which are then answered by individual students, it still means that half of all classroom language is coming from the teacher. Teachers working in state school systems, for example, need to remind themselves frequently of a calculation such as the following: if the students have four 45-minute lessons a week, in a class of 30, there are only 180 minutes available each week to be divided among those students. Even if the class consisted of no reading, pauses for thought, or other activities, but entirely of the teacher asking individual students questions which were answered immediately, the teacher would do 90 minutes talking and each individual student only three minutes. As soon as the practical difficulties are taken into account, this time is greatly reduced and a more realistic estimate of the time spent talking by each individual pupil would be perhaps a minute a week. In those circumstances it is hardly surprising if students' spoken English improves slowly! However much the teacher may be anxious about it, it is essential that techniques are introduced into the classroom to increase the amount of student talking time. Oral work, pair work, and group work are not optional extras, for the students' spoken language to improve, they are essential. One word of warning is, perhaps, necessary. There is more and more evidence that good listening practices have a more important part to play in good language teaching than has sometimes been recognised. A practice, for example, in which students are given two or three questions and then listen to the teacher talking about something can undoubtedly be very useful. It is not necessary

that every practice involves lots of "student talking time." The teacher talking as a planned part of the lesson has an important role to play, providing the students are listening actively. Teachers should, nonetheless, be conscious of the amount of unnecessary talking they do. The general principle is that if the teacher is talking, the students are not getting the practice they need.

7. Don't emphasise difficulties

Learning a foreign language well is difficult. Many students find it difficult to understand conceptual distinctions which do not occur in their own language, and the memory load is high. There is no point in pretending that these difficulties do not exist. As all teachers know, students, particularly in school, do need to be reminded from time to time that there is no short cut to success. Being realistic about difficulties is an important part of the teacher's job. Unfortunately, teachers too often make the subject seem more difficult than it is through a series of casual remarks, the main effect of which must be to undermine the students' confidence.

Here are some examples:

- English is a very difficult language.
- English is full of irregularities — there are no real rules. Well, there's the rule, now let's look at the exceptions. Prepositions are completely illogical. Most teachers will admit to having made these, or similar, remarks. They are obviously unhelpful. It is difficult to think of an occasion when it could be helpful to tell students that what they are struggling to understand is in fact really incomprehensible! Teachers need to be realistic about difficulties — it can be helpful, for example, to tell students before they listen to a tape that the voice has a strong accent. If students are doing a listening-for-gist exercise with a lot of language they may not understand, they need to be told of this difficulty in advance. The principle, however, is for the teacher to be realistic about difficulties, and to avoid undermining the students' confidence by casual ill-considered remarks.

8. Vary what you do, and how you do it

While there are many helpful ways of approaching language teaching, it is a mistake to believe that 'a method' exists which can guarantee success. Every teacher knows that what works one day with one class, does not necessarily work with a different class, or even on a different day with the same class. A textbook which is appropriate to one situation, is often not suitable for another. One statement which is generally true can, however, be made — if the teacher always does the same things in the same way, the students will

Principle 2

Immediate Correction: Immediate correction is important; they make a huge difference. They help the learners respond better by pointing out the areas they need to improve. The methods adopted for correction should encourage learning. It should not discourage the learner or lead to frustration; else they would be discouraged from learning.

Principle 3

Reinforcement: The general principle is that the lessons have to be reinforced immediately. Researchers indicate that reinforcement of correct responses leads to effective learning. The learner should immediately know that his response is correct. This will give the assurance that they are progressing well.

Principle 4

Frequent Review: This is very important in teaching. Review and re-introduction of the same lessons is important so that students can retain better. While reviewing, the teacher should be there and the same contents should be practiced.

Principle 5

Correct Responses: This is another important psychological principle. It requires that the activities should reinforce the concepts and understanding of the language. The methods adopted by the teacher should encourage maximum rate of correct responses. This will give the learners a sense of achievement. They would feel that they have succeeded in making progress.

Principle 6

Practice in Everyday Situations: A language is learnt with more intent when it is necessary for daily situations. Practicing language in the context of everyday use helps learners easily identify with it. In other words, the experiences and environment of the learner should be the starting point.

Language Teaching Software

In a bid to make English language teaching and learning easier, some software has been found reliable. In some institutions, it is just necessary for everyone to have a laptop and some other gadgets like iPad, iPod, TABS, etc., therefore, installing the software is no uphill task. Some of this software are:

1. Tell Me More English

It offers comprehensive features and levels to help the students learn English as beginners and also to improve the learners' skills in complex English. This software was last updated in June 2013 and the fundamentals are: Listening comprehension, Reading, Vocabulary, Writing, Speech recognition, Conversation practice, Grammar. The tools are: 24hrs of instructional materials, personal progress tracking, online testing, glossary, personalized learning path, word processing, conversation and root search, and dictionary. The teaching tools are: images, videos, record

playback and compare, CDs. Apart from all these tools, the software also comes with learning games like: crossword puzzle, unique games. This software is very durable because not only can the learner learn in his comfort; he also has the power to be a teacher to himself and learning is made easier and faster. With the other features like games, learning becomes more interesting and students are more interested in learning.

2. Transparent Language Online

Transparent Language Online is designed to help the learners learn English quickly, with efficiency. Learning English in Transparent Language occurs through the "declarative first" approach. It focuses on the declarative memory, which learns and retains vocabulary, phrases and short sentences, as opposed to focusing on the procedural memory, which learns English grammar skills and language procedure. This ESL application offers a full array of fundamental features, numerous instruction languages and key tools to help the students learn English in a modern, easy-to-use application. Transparent Language Online helps the students learn English through units that consist of a series of lessons. The lessons consist of several learning activities to help the students learn vocabulary, pronunciation and other language skills. Some units end with assessments. And if the student passes the assessment, the entire unit is marked as complete and the student moves on to the next unit. This is a good system for incremental learning. The first lesson is the Conversation Preview, in which a brief story is listened to, and the lesson progresses to the Phrase Map activity, which presents words and phrases from the audio on the student's screen. The next ESL activity is Preview It, which is a series of flash cards with words and definitions. This is followed by the Recognize & Say It activity, which consists of flash cards. A word, and a sentence that uses the word, are written on the flash cards. The students must guess the definition of the word, and then flip the card to see if they are correct.

The inbuilt Matching activity is designed to teach and improve reading skills. Words are dragged on the left of the screen to fit within blank spots in sentences. The Four Square activity comes next. It calls for viewing words and phrases on cards. The cards quickly flip to obscure the words and phrases. Text appears at the top of the screen and the student must find the hidden word or phrase that matches the text. It's a short-term memory game. The Read and Answer activity is designed to teach reading comprehension. The Pronunciation activity comes next. There is a Dictation activity in this ESL application that teaches students how to write. They listen to a word or phrase, and then type it. Correct letters appear in the feedback box as they type them. They can get hints if they like. The final activity is Conversation Practice. It simulates conversation. They must first choose a character to play in the conversation. The application areas in this software are: Man-Machine Interface, Speech Recognition, Speech Synthesis, and Intelligent Word Processing.

3 Hello Hello World

This language learning software is just like the others. It has installed conversational animated lessons with assessment at the end of every lesson. All skills in basic English are being taught. With this software, learners can have a depth knowledge of the English language and they would not have issues with Basic English. The software gives both conversational courses (speaking and writing skills) and Vocabulary Training. The application areas in this software are: Machine Interface, Speech Recognition, and Speech Synthesis.

4 Mango Passport Language Learning Program

Mango Passport is designed specifically for use from an individual's home, office, computer or laptop. It differs from other language learning software programs because it goes beyond teaching grammar, vocabulary and conjugation and also provides engaging content, intuitive interactive tools and a comprehensive learning methodology. Users not only learn individual words and phrases but also how to use them in real-life situations. These types of fundamental conversation skills greatly improve a student's ability to interact. It also teaches through the use of translation from one language to the target language. The application areas in this software are: Machine Translation, Speech Recognition, and Man-Machine Interface.

5. Rosetta Stone English (Version 4 TOTALE)

Rosetta Stone English helps students learn English through an interactive system of incremental advancement in the language. Learning English in Rosetta Stone occurs through three core components. The students learn, practise and play to reinforce what they have learnt. The Rosetta Stone learning method is about absorbing English. They will start by learning words instead of vocabulary lists. There is also speech recognition technology to help them perfect their English pronunciation. The students can enter the Rosetta Studio and schedule a session with a native speaking coach to practise their speaking skills. They can play games and speak with other learners through Rosetta World. Rosetta Stone also offers a mobile application so that they can learn on their iPod or iPad. The software has fundamental features such as reading, vocabulary, speech recognition and writing. It does not let students practise conversation or instruct them about English grammar or cultural aspects. English exercises in this ESL application present a set of photos on the screen. The students match sentences to the unlabeled photos. For a sentence such as "The woman is eating," they would click on the photo that displays a woman eating.

Conclusion

The paper has established the fact that language teaching can take various forms like classroom teaching or online using language teaching software. The online teaching can be in the form of recorded files. It could be in the form of standard text or could involve study materials, sound files and other combinations. Teachers may deliver a predefined curriculum which is designed and developed by

some experts. The teachers need to follow the new trends in language teaching and learning as they are anchored on language teaching software. There are principles to follow in language teaching and learning. They are necessary for effective learning. Language is a separate subject and a part of school education and therefore, it goes with some laid down principles. These principles aim at teaching the target language and making the learner understand the link between language and communication. The purpose of language teaching is to facilitate students to gain ownership of the diverse social practices. The students should be able to use language effectively in life. The students have to be taught to use language to organize their thought, to deliberate, to evaluate and resolve issues and so that they can access their current and past cultural expressions. Besides, the students should be able to understand the contribution of language in knowledge building and cultural values. They should be able to adopt an analytical and responsible attitude towards the challenges that the world is encountering.

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