

## INSTITUTE FOR RETRAINING AND ADVANCED TRAINING OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PERSONNEL AND MANAGER

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Methodologies for Teaching English in Early Childhood Education

### ABSTRACT

The goal of this paper is to share a previous study aimed at establishing the main basis when choosing the best approach and the most appropriate methodologies to teaching English as a Second Language in Pre-Primary Education.

**Keywords:** Methodologies, language teaching, early childhood education, Total physical response.

### INTRODUCTION

In the English Teaching Process (ETP), it is essential to determine whether a given method focuses on acquiring or learning the language.

It is essential to emphasize the significance of Pre-Primary education. According to Wilder Penfield's 1959 Critical period hypothesis (as cited in Asher & Garcia, 1969), there is a critical period after which it becomes exceedingly challenging to acquire a second language at the level of a native speaker. This would explain why it is so challenging for adults to learn a new language, distinguish between sounds, and produce them. The purpose of this section is to emphasize the significance of incorporating Early Childhood Education (ECE) methods that facilitate the development of English skills in subsequent years by emphasizing the importance of establishing solid foundations early on.

When the ETP seeks to teach English as a Second Language (ESL), the path and rate of the student's progress should be taken into account. The rate is the rate at which a language is acquired (Myles, 2011).

Regarding the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) process, Myles (2011) contends that teachers should be more concerned about their students' rate of learning due to the pedagogical issues that are implicit. Teachers must observe what enables students to comprehend and acquire a language more quickly, as well as their capacities at various developmental stages. From this, they will be able to adapt the learning path and select the most suitable methodologies based on the circumstances (Myles, 2011).

According to Taylor, linguists have demonstrated that there is no singular optimal method for everyone in all contexts and that there is no teaching method that is inherently superior to the others. In addition, applying the same methodology to all students is not always possible or appropriate.

Teachers and students must have a solid understanding of the various instructional approaches. In addition, there are a number of factors that must be considered when selecting the most effective method, including age, objectives, environment, learning styles, needs, context, prior knowledge, mother tongue, aptitudes, backgrounds, ambitions, attitude, as well as the duration and frequency of the lessons. It also implies motivation, commitment, time, and effort.

Richard and Rodgers (1986) stated that a language teaching method is theoretically related to one approach, either as a theory of the nature of the language or as a theory of the nature of language learning, by designing and then implementing procedures. In Early Childhood Education (ECE) settings, some of the following second-language-teaching strategies from the last fifty years could be utilised:

(a) The Community Language Learning method (Krashen, 1982) seeks to establish strong personal ties between the teacher and the student, regardless of learning boundaries, by employing the native language, translating it into English, and promoting repetition and familiarity with the new concepts.

(b) In the Silent Way method, the teacher attempts to utter as few words as possible in order to help students feel at ease and find the appropriate words to express themselves. Even if a pupil were to say "I'm going to the loo," they would be in control of what they are attempting to communicate without using their native language.

(c) The Direct Method is conducted wholly in English, and students are strongly encouraged to respond in English as well, using their native language only in exceptional circumstances. At Colegio San Patricio, it was explicitly observed that by the conclusion of the Pre-Primary period, students are able to address and understand their teachers in English perfectly, thereby enhancing their English acquisition.

(d) The Audio-lingual method is predicated on adapting classroom habits to English learning. Promoting dialogue in all circumstances. For instance, during the morning rituals of singing, praying, reviewing the calendar and the weather, and establishing classroom norms, etc. This method supports the notion that in order to acquire a language, it must first be heard and comprehended before being seen in written form.

(e) The Suggestopedia method consists of conveying that the English language is straightforward, avoiding or eliminating

mental barriers to English learning, and utilizing singing or simple activities.

(f) The Communicative language teaching method (CLT) creates situations for students to communicate effectively in various settings, such as school, shopping, the street, or the doctor's office, by suggesting concepts, facts, or locations and inviting other students to participate, thereby boosting their confidence in speaking English in a variety of settings.

g) The Immersion method entails studying school subjects in an English-speaking environment and acquiring English as a means to "survive" This method may adhere to Krashen's (1982) Natural Approach, which emphasises the similarities between acquiring the native language and the second language. There would be no corrections necessary because they would evolve naturally.

The difference between the Immersed Method and the Direct Method is that in the Immersed Method, students learn the language in an English-speaking environment that is made comprehensible to them, whereas in the Direct Method, students learn the language in an English-speaking environment that is natural and native-like.

(h) Although the Task-based Language Learning method can be used in early childhood education, it is primarily used in middle and high school. Students engage with specific vocabulary for a number of weeks and are then evaluated using tasks. This method is more effective in Pre-Primary as task-command activities, such as "Give me the apple" or "Stand up, sit down."

Pre-primary teachers must bear in mind that children develop language comprehension first, then begin responding in their native language, and then gradually begin speaking the second language when they feel secure and are prepared to speak longer sentences. Keep in mind that if students frequently speak their mother language, they may become confused, stop making an effort to use English because they know the teacher understands them, and wind up speaking in their mother tongue.

In addition to these eight methodologies, there are three others used in ECE when teaching in the native language: cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and total physical response. However, as children are already accustomed with these methods, it is important to investigate the possibility of incorporating them into the English Teaching Process.

### **Cooperative Learning**

Using the Cooperative Learning (CL) approach to education entails organizing the classroom into a number of groups that work together and share academic and social

experiences, while fostering inventive, intellectual, and open-ended tasks. In the CL approach, teachers switch from imparting information to facilitating their students' learning. (Ross & Smyth, 1995) A group is successful when all members work cooperatively while acquiring self-esteem, social skills, forming a stronger connection with classmates, and outperforming when learning individually.

Several studies have evaluated the efficacy of cooperative learning as an instructional strategy and proposed methodologies including problem sets, laboratories and projects, jigsaw, peer editing, and peer-led team learning (Feldman & Brent, 2007). In addition, laboratories and projects can be adapted to the ECE classroom through the development of experiments, projects, or group art in which students assist one another in following the teacher's instructions and conversing in English.

This CL approach works well with the maternal tongue and can be adapted to English Teaching Processes once the students have been exposed to the language beforehand, particularly with children who are immersed in the English language.

### **Problem Based Learning**

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a strategy used to engage students in real-world challenges and encourage them to solve problems using strategies and prior knowledge. Instead of being passively informed, students actively work with the information and participate in class. According to research (Stanford University, 2001), PBL also enhances students' problem-solving abilities as they ruminate on factors, facts, and consequences and process diverse information in various situations.

PBL in ECE settings cannot be implemented in the same manner as in Primary or Secondary Education, nor can it be implemented in the same manner as infants do in their regular mother tongue classroom. However, this strategy could be adapted to English instruction. For instance, posing a scenario in which they must identify a bodily part in English, or utilising a circumstance that may arise in the classroom and how to handle it, such as how to say sorry or thank you. Using a PBL approach would primarily aid in the development of comprehension skills and encourage children to speak even a few words in order to participate, share their ideas, and propose solutions to everyday problems.

### **Total Physical Response**

Children are always active and eager to play. The Total Physical Response (TPR) method emphasizes aural comprehension by requiring students to actively respond to specific commands. For instance, "Close your eyes", "Touch your nose", and "Sit down" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Using TPR activities in the ECE classroom encourages physical activity among children. This method's procedures would resemble activities and sports that are motivating and pleasurable methods for teaching and learning the English language. Individually or in groups, TPR activities can be conducted by asking children for commands while the rest of their companions attend and process the information. During my student teaching field experience, this was the most frequently employed and children's favorite method.

### **White paper project**

The White paper initiative, created by Ana Garcia de la Fuente, director of the Art and Visual Programme at Colegio San Patricio, aims to achieve a personalised education through the uncomplicated and enjoyable teaching of a second language. It is based on the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology, and its goals in Early Childhood Education (ECE) are to develop English oral comprehension and the artistic language as a means of allowing children to express themselves in a bilingual environment while enjoying talking about themselves and strengthening the teacher-student bond.

The White Paper initiative consists of three activities geared towards the acquisition, not the learning, of the language through natural teacher-student communication. There are three components to these activities. First, a group conversation in which the instructor and students discuss a topic of interest and develop their listening and speaking skills. During the conversation, the students make connections between the presented information and their prior knowledge. They organise their thoughts and share them along with their knowledge and even their emotions. Second, each pupil would create a free-form drawing to express his or her ideas, feelings, and thoughts. During the first few months, it was observed that the students' drawings were rather simplistic. However, as they continued to use this methodology, the students came to realize that their teacher was interested in learning more about them, and their drawings became more intricate and creative. The third step is the One-to-One conversation. The interaction consists of the instructor and student discussing the drawing in English. It is a significant educational moment that encourages English language speaking and comprehension skills, as well as their individual learning construction process, as well as learning about their innate abilities, experiences, feelings, personality, likes, concerns, and friends and family situations (Salinas, 2016).

### **Correction Methods**

The significance of errors in the learning process can be attributed to teachers not caring about the learning rate of their

students, what motivates them to learn, which methodology to employ, how to adapt it to the characteristics of each group, and the knowledge that should be acquired.

In addition, some professors disregard certain student errors, deeming them insignificant. Typically, instructors should first attempt to help students enjoy and feel secure speaking the language. Then, once they are confident, they can use the following methods to correct their English errors without influencing their confidence:

**Eco Method:** Mr. Stevens, a primary school educator at the school, proposed this approach. It is used during a one-on-one conversation with a pupil who correctly repeats their error. For instance, if a student states, "Yesterday I went to the park," and the teacher responds, "Really? You VISITED the park? What did you do?" The teacher would emphasize the word "went" by articulating it louder, slower, and with a smile, so that the student would associate it with the error and try to recall it for the next time (Mr. Stevens, personal communication, April 13, 2016). During the project's development, this method was used with five-year-old children, some of whom would reiterate "Yes, I went to the park" to demonstrate that they had received the feedback and made the correction without having to interrupt the conversation. In addition, it was demonstrated that other students who were listening also received the feedback and later stated, "I went to the park, too."

**Peer-to-peer:** Some students have a higher level of English development than others, and some speak English at home; therefore, it is crucial that all students are receptive to corrections and suggestions from their classmates and are encouraged to share their English speaking abilities and comprehension. If they needed to communicate with the instructor, they could determine how to do so collectively.

### **Student's developed methodology**

The significance of errors in the learning process can be attributed to instructors not caring about their students' learning rates, what motivates them to learn, which methodology to employ, how to modify it to the characteristics of each group, and the knowledge to be acquired.

In addition, some professors disregard certain errors made by students, deeming them insignificant. Generally speaking, instructors should first endeavour to help students appreciate and feel confident speaking the language. Then, once they have gained confidence, they can utilize the following techniques to correct their English errors without affecting their confidence:

**Eco Method:** This strategy was proposed by Mr. Stevens, a primary school teacher at the institution. During a one-on-one conversation with a student who correctly repeats their error, this

phrase is employed. For example, if a student says, "Yesterday, I went to the park," and the instructor responds, "Really? You have VISITED the park? What did you do?" The instructor would emphasize the word "went" by pronouncing it louder, slower, and with a smile, so that the student would associate it with the error and attempt to recall it the next time (Mr. Stevens, personal communication, April 13, 2016). During the development of the project, this technique was utilized with five-year-old children, some of whom would repeat "Yes, I went to the park" to demonstrate that they had received the feedback and made the correction without interrupting the conversation. In addition, it was demonstrated that other students who were listening also heard the feedback and subsequently stated, "I went to the park, too."

Peer-to-peer: Some students have a higher level of English development than others, and some speak English at home; therefore, it is imperative that all students are receptive to corrections and suggestions from their peers and are encouraged to share their English speaking abilities and comprehension. They could determine collectively how to communicate with the instructor if they needed to.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that all the methods developed so far are designed to teach kindergarten children a foreign language in an easy and convenient way during preschool education. Each of them has its own conveniences and advantages. It should not be forgotten that which of these methods to use depends on the teacher and his skills. The language teacher chooses methods based on the group of students, atmosphere, age of children, living conditions and mentality. In this process, the training program and the scope of topics are also important. The method chosen correctly by the language teacher gives its result.

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