

Situational Approach

Introduction: First of all Hornby used the term situational approach in the title of a popular series of article published in ELT (1950). The situational approach indicates as to how a teacher should create a real situation in the classroom. Now the question that arises is how these real situations can be created in the classroom? The Situational Approach tries to solve this problem. A particular situation helps the teacher to provide practice to the pupils to explain its meaning. A particular situation may be created in the classroom by use of maps, pictures, various objects, actions or by drawing on the black board.

According to this approach the English as a second language should be taught by forming links between the new words and the real situations encountered by the child while learning their mother tongue. All the items are learnt by a child in real situations. The situation in which the child learns his mother-tongue are repeated again and again and whatever the child understands or expresses about his experiences of his own life are then in same way connected with the terminology of the English Language.

Characteristics of situational approach

Speech is the basis of language teaching. The new language items and vocabulary items are graded according to their usefulness, frequency and teachability. The language items thus selected and graded are presented and practised in meaningful situations. Reading and writing are based on items which have already been introduced and practised orally. New words are introduced incidentally in the class. Opportunities are provided to the pupils to associate the meaning of new words with the created situation. Lot of appropriate material is used to create proper and real situations. Examples are given to make the things clear. Teacher gives continuous statements about his actions – He puts before his pupils several questions and answers them himself. The use of mother-tongue is emphasized.

Merits of the Situational Approach

- (1) It creates interest among the students.
- (2) Emphasis is given on learning by play.
- (3) Action chains make the classroom atmosphere lively.
- (4) Lot of material aid is used to make the learning stable and interesting.
- (5) Lot of examples can be given.
- (6) The teacher can make his illustrations clear by using various materials or by pictures etc.
- (7) Stress is given on learning through hearing.

Demerits of the Situational Approach

- (1) It is suitable only in the lower classes as this approach cannot be made applicable to the senior classes.
- (2) Text books cannot be taught by this method.
- (3) Only well selected sentence patterns can be taught by this approach.
- (4) That minimum makes the classroom dull.
- (5) Trained teachers are required for it.
- (6) Prose, poetry, rapid reader etc. cannot be taught through this approach.

Conclusion: Situational Language Teaching involves accurate use of vocabulary items and grammar rules in order to achieve a practical mastery of the four basic skills. Learners must be able to produce accurate pronunciation and use of grammar. The ultimate aim is to be able to respond quickly and accurately in speech situations with an automatic control of basic structures and sentence patterns.

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