

What is 'Situational Language Teaching (SLT)'?

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or, Discuss the approach, design, and procedures of Situational Language Teaching.

Situational Language Teaching (SLT) is an approach to language teaching that emerged in the 1930s and 1940s. It focuses on teaching language through the context of situations that students might encounter in everyday life. The method was developed to help learners use language naturally and effectively in specific scenarios. Let us explain the definition of SLT and discuss its approach, design, and procedures.

Definition of SLT: Situational Language Teaching is a method of teaching language by placing students in situations where they must use the language to communicate. The idea is to teach language in a way that closely mirrors how it is used in real life. For example, students practice using the language in the situation instead of just learning vocabulary and grammar rules.

Approach: SLT is based on the behaviourist theory of language learning, which sees language as a set of habits formed through repetition and reinforcement. The approach focuses on:

Contextual Learning: Language is learned best when taught in a context that resembles real-life situations. This helps students understand how language functions in various situations.

Oral Practice: Speaking and listening are prioritized. Students are encouraged to practice sentences and dialogues related to specific situations. It helps to build fluency.

Inductive Learning: Instead of directly teaching grammar rules, SLT encourages students to learn through examples. They discover grammar patterns by using language in context.

Use of Drills: Repetition and practice are necessary elements. Drills help reinforce correct language use and make it a habit for students.

Design: The design of SLT includes specific elements that structure the learning process. These elements include:

Syllabus: The syllabus in SLT is usually situational. Lessons are organized around common situations that students might face, like shopping, traveling, or meeting new people.

Materials: Teaching materials include textbooks, pictures, and realia (real-life objects) that help create the context for each situation. Audio recordings of dialogues may also be used to model pronunciation and intonation.

Teacher's Role: The teacher plays a central role in SLT. They set up situations, provide models for correct language use, and guide students through practice sessions. The teacher also corrects errors and provides feedback.

Learner's Role: Learners are active participants. They are expected to practice speaking, listening, and interacting in the target language. They learn by doing, which helps them develop confidence in using the language.

Procedure: The procedure of SLT involves several steps that ensure effective learning:

Presentation: The teacher introduces new language items in a specific context, usually by modeling a dialogue or set of sentences that students will use in a given situation.

Practice: Students practice the new language through drills and repetition. They might repeat sentences after the teacher or practice dialogues in pairs or groups.

Production: After practice, students are encouraged to use the language independently. They might role-play the situation or answer questions using the language they have learned.

Review: Teachers review and reinforce what has been learned. They may revisit previous situations to ensure students retain and can use the language correctly.

In conclusion, Situational Language Teaching is a method that emphasizes learning language through real-life situations. It combines contextual learning, oral practice, and inductive learning to help students develop practical language skills. SLT remains useful for beginners who need to develop confidence and fluency in a new language.