

## IMPARTING DIFFERENT TEACHING TECHNIQUES FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE STUDENTS LANGUAGE SKILLS

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**Abstract:** Many areas of education are undergoing changes in the way teaching and learning is perceived. Teacher-centered lecturing and structural-syllabus instruction are giving way to a more student-centered, hands-on, practical, and flexible approaches. The field of second language teaching is no exception in this paradigm shift. One of the areas which came under this paradigm shift is the traditional Present-Practice-Produce method of teaching English. Every language teacher today realizes the importance and the relevance of the "student-centered, hands-on, practical and flexible approach, and the worldwide demand for Communicative Language Teaching which helps to understand the language in context and to use it effectively in situations outside the classroom. Thus, changes have been taking place in many areas of education. The field of second language teaching is no exception in this paradigm shift. But for ELT, it has become a challenge to accommodate the changes due to various reasons. The most important factor is that one cannot ignore the practical aspect of every existing education system. For example, completing the syllabus using the prescribed text books, preparing students for examinations are part of many classroom realities. Despite the honest intention of tailoring a needs-based flexible course, every teacher is required to function within a large, systematized, controlled education system. This is inevitable in large institutions as in India where the number of learners in a course could exceed several hundred. The entire machinery acquires a certain regimentation forced by the demands of time, place and funds, but if a teacher is resourceful, s/he can still find ways to overcome the difficulties associated with the systematized and controlled education system to make learning more meaningful. Four innovative methodologies currently practiced in the teaching of foreign languages are discussed: The Task Based Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching, Multimedia Learning and the Mind Mapping Technique.

Thus, an innovative teaching and learning method is not panacea, yet it cannot completely replace traditional methods. Hence I suggest that innovative methods shall be applied and introduced in collaboration with the traditional ones. However innovative methods can provide the students significant experience with practice and opportunities to deal with real situations. The idea of innovative teaching and learning methods is to translate the enthusiasm of teaching to students' enthusiasm to learn.

**Introduction:** English Language Teaching (ELT) is of course, 'what English language teachers do'. Yet this statement of the obvious obscures the complexity of a field which incorporates teaching and learning English as second, foreign or as an international lingua franca: for specific, academic or more general purposes; in different countries and contexts; and at different levels (primary, secondary, tertiary or adult). English is increasingly a lingua franca in conversations between those who do not share a first language. Similarly, the now widespread recognition of the importance of bilingualism and multilingualism for individual and societal language use suggests that English will not be the second language of a substantial number of learners around the world.

ELT has emerged as a recognizable and distinctive entity due to increased migration, growth of multinational capitalism, internationalization of education and more recently by globalization, the development of internet and online communication and the related continued spread of English around the world. As a profession, ELT is constituted by teacher, teacher trainer and educators, curriculum designers and material writers, administrators and

planners and forth. ELT is also a focus of central concern; ELT professionals are subject to academic perspective which offer prompts and possibilities for practice rather than neat 'one-size-fit-all' solutions to the challenges of the ELT today. Pennycook describes English as a 'worldly language' (1994:36), a term which reflects its spread around the world and its worldly character because of being used so widely in the world. English and the ways in which the language is used, both, reflects and shapes the world we live in. Equally, ELT is itself as "worldly enterprise in which social, cultural and political developments and debated surrounding English underpin how and why the language is taught. Language teaching methods have been the key focus of the ELT with the search for the 'best method'. Some of the methods are discussed here on.

**Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT):** TBLT grew out of applied linguists and pedagogues' discontent with the prevailing approach to second/foreign language teaching during second half of the twentieth century. Long (1985) argued that the language was approached as a system of elements and rules which were explicitly taught in a piecemeal and decontextualized fashion. He also said that this

approach is largely inconsistent firstly because of artificiality, secondly the learners are asked to produce errorless output at an early age of acquisition and thirdly for the complex challenge of making spontaneous conversation in the target language. In India, Prabhu (1987) was the first to organize a language learning curriculum around a series of task-based projects (The Bangalore Project) which hinged on the basic hypothesis that people learn real and useful language more quickly if they try non-linguistic ends. Around the same time, Long (1985) and Pica (1987), amongst others, also coined the term 'task-based' in the United States. Task-based teaching is about creating opportunities for meaning focused language use. The main advantages of TBL are that language is used for a genuine purpose meaning that real communication should take place and that at the stage where the learners are preparing their report for the whole class, they are forced to consider language form in general rather than concentrating on a single form (as in the Presentation-Practice-Production form). The range of tasks available like reading texts, listening texts, problem-solving, role plays, questionnaires, etc. offer a great deal of flexibility in this model and should lead to more motivating activities for the learners.

**Communicative Language Teaching:** Since its inception in the 1970s, CLT has served as a major source of influence on language teaching practice around the world. Communicative language teaching created a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement when it first appeared as a new approach to language teaching in the 1970s and 1980s, and language teachers and teaching institutions all around the world soon began to rethink their teaching, syllabuses, and classroom materials. Several new syllabus types were proposed by advocates of CLT. Another role assumed by several CLT approaches is that of counsellor, like the way this role is defined in Community Language Learning. Many of the issues raised by a communicative teaching methodology are still relevant today, though teachers who are relatively new to the profession may not be familiar with them. Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of languages that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the goal of learning a language. The communicative approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as "communicative competence." Hymes coined this term to contrast a communicative view of language and Chomsky's theory of competence. Chomsky held that linguistic theory is concerned with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant

conditions as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (Chomsky 1965: 3). Despite several criticisms, it continues to be popular. Earlier views of language learning focused primarily on the mastery of grammatical competence. Language learning was viewed as a process of mechanical habit formation. By memorizing dialogues and performing drills, the chances of making mistakes were minimized. Learning was very much seen as under the control of the teacher. In recent years, language learning has been viewed from a very different perspective. It is resulting from processes such as:

1. Creating meaningful interaction through language between the learner and users of the language
2. Collaborative creation of meaning, negotiation of meaning and learning through attending the feedback.
3. Paying attention to the language one hears (the input) and trying to incorporate new forms and experiment into one's developing communicative competence.

An influential development in the history of communicative language teaching was the work of the Council of Europe in creating new language syllabi. These include:

Functional syllabus which is organized per the functions the learner should be able to carry out in English, such as expressing likes and dislikes, offering and accepting apologies, introducing someone, and giving explanations. Communicative competence is viewed as mastery of functions needed for communication across a wide range of situations. Vocabulary and grammar are then chosen per the functions being taught. Functional syllabus was often used as the basis for speaking and listening courses.

Skills-based syllabus which focuses on the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and breaks each skill down into its component micro skills. For example, the skill of listening might be further described in terms of the following micro skills like topic, keywords, speaker's attitude, time reference and speed.

**Other Activity Types in CLT:** Task-completion: Puzzles, games, map-reading, and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus is on using one's language resources to complete a task.

**Information-Gathering:** Student-conducted surveys, interviews, and searches in which students are required to use their linguistic resources to collect information. Opinion-sharing: Activities in which students compare values, opinions, or beliefs.

**Information-Transfer:** These require learners to take information that is presented in one form, and represent it in a different form.

**Reasoning-Gap Activities:** These involve deriving some new information from given information through the process of inference, practical reasoning, etc.

Communicative language teaching has continued to evolve as our understanding of the processes of second language learning has developed.

**Mind-Mapping Technique:** Mind maps can be used for a multitude of purposes. The mind map or spider gram is a structured strategy which shows the relationship of ideas as opposed to an unstructured strategy such as brainstorming in which the student produce ideas as notes at random on paper. It is an organized display of information from the outset of the learning process. Mind maps work well as their visual design enables students to enhance their learning skills. In case of writing, the mind mapping strategy can be used to explore almost any topic through discursive essays and narrative work particularly well as they front students' ideas and lend themselves discussing ideas in group. Mind mapping was developed as n effective method for generating ideas by association in the 1960s (Murley 2007). It is a visual tool that can be used to generate ideas, take notes, organize thinking and develop concepts (Budd, 2003; Murley, 2007; Siriphanic & Laohawiriyano, 2010; Al-Jarb, 2011). In other words, it is a tool for language teaching that helps the teacher to introduce multiple words that are linked to one subject or theme. There are four main features of a mind-map.

- Each mind-map has a central node that serve as a starting location containing the main theme or idea.
- The ideas of the mind-map radiate from the central node as branches with sub nodes connected to each other in parent-child relationship.
- The final structure of the mind map becomes a hierarchy of linked nodes. The radiant structure of a mins-map with explicit branches promotes associations.
- Each connector or branch has keyword or colourful images associated with them. The use of images in the entire mind-map is recommended.

Budd (2005) points out that a traditional outline is often monochromatic whereas the use of colour is important in creating mind-maps. Mind mapping welcomes more flexibility than outlining does, students' creativity is subsequently encouraged. Memory retention is enhanced as mind map allows displaying all related topics on the same mind map. According to Al-Jarb (2011) mind mapping enhances learning and it also enables students to better organize, prioritize and integrate material presented in a course. A study on the use of mind mapping technique was conducted by Siriphanic &

Laohawiriyano in college, the results showed a tremendous improvement in reading activity of the students. The students also showed excitement when getting involved in teaching and learning process. The disadvantages (mention one or two) are far outweighed by the advantages. Mind map helps the student to develop the communication skills in a brilliant way. Mind maps have been embraced in the realm of education as a learning tool which helps student reinforce knowledge by making connections between different areas and delving in-depth into an area. Mind maps are also used for vocabulary development. Syahrudin (2000) states that, "Vocabulary is a process through which meaning is created". Vocabulary as one language element which functions not only to support the use of other elements of language but also to facilitate the use of the four language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing.

**Multimedia:** To keep pace with English language teaching and gain more confidence, the teachers must stride into the world of multimedia technology. Here, multimedia technology refers to computer-based interactive applications that use both the hardware and software, allowing people to share their ideas and information. It is a combination of text, graphics, animation, video and sound. The twenty first century is the age of globalization and information technology as Harry Samuels argues, "Much more recent developments in social media and information technology is taking foreign-language education in new directions". Multimedia technology and language teaching have gone hand in hand for a long time and contributed as teaching tools in the language classrooms. However, multimedia technology is still a source of fears and insecurity for many teachers everywhere around the world despite the latest developments applicable to language teaching such as websites, blogs, online journals, teaching methodology and so on. In this connection, Deborah Healey et. al. say, "the pace and extent of change in technology for teaching, however, have made it difficult for many teachers, teacher educators, and administrators to know how best to employ computers, other forms of digital technology, and the global interaction enabled by the Internet in language teaching". Multimedia will provoke radical changes in the teaching process during the coming decades, particularly as smart students discover they can go beyond the limits of traditional teaching methods. Indeed, in some instances, teachers may become more like guides and mentors along a learning path, primary providers of information and understanding—the students, not the teachers, become the core of the teaching and learning process. Multimedia teaching method is being widely used in engineering colleges today. Since a language

laboratory is essentially established, it is well equipped with the tools of multimedia which makes teaching easy, more lively and interesting for the teacher. There is a milieu of enthusiasm among the students as the audio-visual creates visibility and

liveliness. It has contributed a lot to higher teaching quality. Chalk and Talk teaching method is not enough to teach English effectively. We should change our teaching ideas and recognize its impersonal attribute as one kind of teaching method.

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