



## INNOVATIVE TOOLS OF TEACHING ENGLISH

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### Abstract

Innovative tools of teaching English or any other language mean a coherent set of links between actions and thoughts. The actions are the tools and the thoughts are the principles in Language teaching.

It is also very important to recognize that tools or methods of teaching link thoughts and actions. As a teacher of language, one has to have thoughts about the subject matter what language is, what culture is and most important is about students who they are as learners and how they learn. One should also have thoughts about oneself as a teacher and aware about what the teacher can do to help students to learn. This awareness will enable us as teachers to examine why we do, what we do and think about doing things differently.

Hence language can be taught in an effective way when a teacher uncovers the thoughts which guide one's own actions. This paper explores such new thoughts, tools or methods in teaching English language.

"The Language you speak  
Shapes the way you think".

### Introduction

"The capacity to learn languages is entirely environmental and not inherent. For example, tribal languages are not taught in school. They (children) pick it up as they grew older" says Dr. Shailendra Mohan, Secretary, Linguistics Society of India, Pune.

Definitely when the teachers provide with good learning environment, students can learn any language easily. "Languages are

created by the mind, of course, and therefore, the construct of a language offers us clues about the minds and culture of its people. At an individual level, a person's choice of words and metaphors reveal the unconscious process of the mind" - according to Dr. Shyam Bhat, psychiatrist. Further he says "Words are important tools of my profession. I have to be sensitive to the language used, the rhythm, resonance and cadence of the words that are spoken". Hence words can become an excellent tool for any language teacher for creating a conducive teaching learning environment.

Each word used by the teacher is used for a reason. For example, 'I have diabetes' or 'I am diabetic', two different forms of language which convey different meanings. Another example "Neela hurt me". This sentence conveys many meanings depending upon the context. So words should be used and understood according to situation. It also matters a lot, who is saying and who is listening. In the class room teacher can change the state of mind of a student through words.

Another tool a language teacher can use is games. Games are used frequently in communicative language teaching. If the teachers plan and design suitable games, then they can give students valuable communicative practice. For example, card game. In this game, an information gap exists because the speaker did not know what the other classmate was going to do in the class. The speaker had a choice as to what she/he would predict and how the others would interpret it. Games like word snap, sentence shuffle can be planned and designed by the teacher.

In the process of learning a new language some words are fully understood and used regularly by the learner for self-expression (Active vocabulary). But some words learners recognize, understand but don't use them (Passive vocabulary). To facilitate the students to use the newly acquired words as active vocabulary tools like word puzzles can be used. With this student can learn new words and then they can take up the task of using them in their conversations.

#### **The phonetic principle:**

Spoken language depends on the medium of sound. It requires fine skills of manipulating the speech organs. The tools like Radio, recordings, television, CDs, PPT, Language Labs and other audio-visual aids can be used to deal effectively with the problems connected with spoken medium.

Learning a foreign language is an artificial process and it is never as "natural" as the process of learning the mother tongue. It is true that the schools or colleges cannot provide continuous atmosphere but the strong social compulsion and variety of models to imitate and to form habits will help to have such atmosphere. Even some experts have tried to create artificial situations resembling home conditions and situations so the task of an English teacher becomes easy, as well as to make English a natural language.

Author John Hope Mason writes "To make a language natural it must be spoken; it is fruitless and impossible to make a language usable that exists only on page." Hence a learner should make use of the language in his communication on a daily basis. We know that Language teaching is an art. Like all other arts language learning also needs sustained "practice and drill". Like singing, dancing and swimming, learning of language also needs a good deal of constant practice.

For healthy language habits students must pay attention to habit of listening to the sounds of English words, speaking it with proper accent and intonation. Develop habit of learning correct spellings of difficult words as well as reading aloud with articulation. Students should also know silent reading with speed and comprehend whatever they read. Teachers have to provide opportunities for students to develop habit of using words and phrases in their proper context, encourage speaking correct structures in simple conversation. Students have to realize writing simple but correct English in good handwriting and consulting dictionary are important. Make a habit of reading newspapers, magazines and books of general interest which will definitely enhance their language skills.

As a teacher of English at tertiary level, the above said habits can be followed in the classroom teaching. To mention other examples, make students to use their mobiles for finding out meanings of difficult words from the text

while teaching. Relate text topics by making students to read aloud some event reports or excerpts from newspapers while teaching. Sometimes make them to listen to some English song or a poem and let them learn pronunciation. Even teachers can use Twitter to communicate with the class

Sometimes try to involve students in developing the content of a lesson or a poem. While teaching Narrative paragraphs, shift the focus to sharing personal stories. Encourage the students to share accounts of their childhood and write about important events or experiences in their lives. Hence it has become very essential to the language teachers to adopt a task - based approach oppose to text book teaching. These tools will keep students interacting and engaging.

Sometimes students don't seem to like writing in class, but they do quite a bit of writing in their daily lives, in the form of tweets and facebook updates. The teacher can create a twitter account and a Google+ page for the class to start writing short messages in response to each other. Gradually teachers can assign them different roles to contribute to a short story or some creative writing. The students definitely love it as it is totally different to their out of class experience.

The capacity to reason, motivation, and need based systems, other cultural, political and economic reasons are responsible for some people learning more languages than others. "It depends on when you get exposed to it, what the mode of communication is and how important that language is for you" says Rajkumari.K, a post - doctoral scholar at Nimahans. So, the teachers of English should give ample opportunities so that the students are exposed to English language - either it is listening and speaking or reading and writing.

As every language has its own culture and traditions, while learning a particular language we learn many things about the people who speak it, their ways of life, their thoughts

and their traditions. This applies to English language learning too. This kind of knowledge can be conveyed only through carefully selected aids, such as wall - pictures, film - shows which are good devices to make language teaching concrete and interesting. The concrete aids are more meaningful to the learners and even the slow learners in the class are benefited.

Zoltan Dornyei, a British linguist identifies some productive language learning tasks.

1. Challenge: tasks in which learners solve problems, discover something, overcome obstacles or find information.
2. Interesting content: topics that students find interesting such as stories of sports men or celebrities, which can be found on Youtube and internet.
3. The personal element: activities that make connections to the learner's lives and concerns.
4. The novelty element: aspects of an activity that are new or different or totally unexpected.
5. Individual choice: Look for tasks which give students a personal choice. For example students can choose their own topics to write about or group discussion activity. etc.,
6. Tasks that encourage risk taking: Make the students feel comfortable and not to be worried about making mistakes and feel reluctant to take part in activities. Reward the students even for their effort and not only for success.
7. Tasks that encourage original thought: activities that require an original response, where for example, instead of asking comprehension questions after reading a passage, encourage them a personal or individual response to what they have read.

8. The fantasy element: activities that engage the learners' fantasy and invite the learners' fantasy and invite the learners to use their imagination for creating make - believe stories, identifying with fictional characters or acting out imaginary situations.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, the skills and abilities cannot be acquired all at once. English language teacher can make wonders not by a magic wand but constant practice over a period of time. The teacher needs to provide lot of opportunities to listen, to speak, to read and write in meaningful situations. Not only the tools discussed above but there are many other dimensions to effective teaching. A teacher should be able to adopt one which is very suitable to his / her students and also taking into account various aspects like infrastructure and other facilities. Using innovative tools can provide a teacher a source of ongoing professional renewal and satisfaction and for the learners, they can develop their capacities for original ideas and creative thinking.

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