

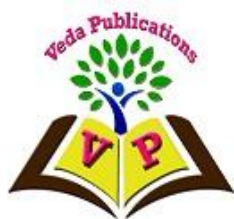
## INNOVATIVE TOOLS OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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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.

**Keywords:** *Tools, Thoughts, Actions, Methods, Language.*

**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, a 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

**Words:** 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 "Jo hurt me". This sentence conveys many meanings depending upon the context. Hence words should be used and understood according to the situation. It really matters a lot, who is saying and who is listening. Through exercises on one-word substitutes, framing sentences using a particular word with different meanings a teacher can change the state of mind of a student. Hence words play a prominent role and are important tool for learning a language.

**Games:** Another tool a language teacher can use is games. Games are used frequently in communicative language teaching. If the teacher plans, designs, the games properly, 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 his/ her classmate was going to do the following weekend. The speaker had a choice as to what he/she would predict and how they would predict it.

In the process of learning a new language some words are fully understood and are used regularly by the learner for self expression. It is called Active vocabulary. Students recognize and understand some words while reading or listening but never used by them. It is called passive vocabulary. To facilitate the students to use the newly acquired words as active vocabulary; card games, puzzles, and vocabulary activities can be of great help. Through such games students can learn new words and then they try to take up the task of using them in their conversations.

**The phonetic principle:** Spoken language depends on the medium of sound requiring fine skills of manipulating the speech organs. The tools like Radio, Recordings, Television, CDs, PPT, You-tube, 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, the strong social compulsion and variety of models to imitate and to form habits. But some experts have tried to create artificial situations resembling home conditions and situations so the task of an English teacher is to make English a natural language. Unless a language is spoken and much of it heard, one can't learn it.

"To make a language natural it must be spoken; it is fruitless and impossible to make a language usable that exists only on page" says John Hope - Mason. Hence a learner should make use of the language in his communication Language teaching is an art. Like all other arts it needs sustained "practice and drill". Like singing, dancing and swimming, the learning of language also needs a good deal of constant practice. For healthy language habits pupils must pay attention to:

- I. Habit of listening to the sounds of English words
- II. Habit of speaking English with proper accent and intonation
- III. Habit of learning spellings
- IV. Habit of reading aloud with articulation

- V. Habit of silent reading with speed and understanding
- VI. Habit of using words and word - phrases in their proper context
- VII. Habit of speaking correct structures in simple conversation.
- VIII. Habit of writing simple but correct English in good handwriting.
- IX. Habit of consulting dictionary.
- X. Habit of reading news papers, magazines and books of general interest.

As a teacher of English at tertiary level, I strive to bring in above said habits in my classroom teaching. For example, I make students to use their mobiles for finding out meanings for difficult words. I make them read aloud some event reports or excerpts from English news papers while teaching Event Report writing. Sometimes make them to listen to some English song or a poem and to make them understand how the words are pronounced. While teaching Narrative paragraphs, I shift the focus to sharing personal stories. Students are encouraged to share accounts of their childhood and write about important events or experiences in their lives.

Some people learn more languages than others. Motivation, need based systems, cultural, political and economic reasons are responsible for it. Hence it has become very essential to the language teachers to adopt a task - based approach rather than only text book teaching. It can be developed through interaction with students and engaging them in some interesting tasks.

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, paragraph writing or some creative writing. The students definitely love it as it is totally different to their class experience.

"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 where the students are exposed to English language - either it is listening and speaking or reading and writing.

A language has its own culture and traditions. While learning English we learn many things about English people, their ways of life, their thoughts and their traditions. This kind of knowledge can be conveyed only through carefully selected material aids, such as wall - pictures, film - shows which are good devices to make a lesson concrete and interesting. The concrete teaching aids are more meaningful to the learners and even the slow learners in the class are benefited.

Dornyei identifies some productive language learning tasks.

1. **Challenge:** Give the learners some tasks in which they find something new to learn, solve problems, overcome obstacles, or find information.
2. **Interesting content:** Teachers can introduce topics that interests the learners such as biographies/stories of scientists, women achievers, sports persons etc which can be found on You tube and internet.
3. **The personal element:** Chalk out some tasks where students get a chance to make connections to their lives and concerns.
4. **The novelty element:** Can add some novelty in the activities so that learners involve themselves. Activities that are new different or totally unexpected ones add liveliness to the class.
5. **Individual choice:** Choose 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:** This is very important to make the students feel comfortable and not to be worried about making mistakes. In turn they feel reluctant to take participate in the activities. Praise & Reward the students even for their effort and not only for success.
7. **Tasks that encourage original thought:** Encourage students to have original thoughts & responses. For example; not only asking the comprehension questions after reading a passage, but also individual response to what they have read. encourage them a

personal or individual response to what they have read.

**8. The fantasy element:** Activities which promote learners' fantasy, imagination have great importance. For example identifying with fictional characters or acting out imaginary situations help them a lot.

### **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, the skills and abilities cannot be acquired all at once. Teaching and learning is a continuous process. Hence English language teacher can make wonders not by a magic wand but by constant practice over a period of time. The teacher needs to provide the learners a lot of opportunities to listen, to speak, to read and write in meaningful situations. There are many other dimensions to effective teaching. But 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 competency and satisfaction and for the learners; they can develop their capacities for original ideas and for creative thinking. Patience and encouragement always boosts up the learning abilities of the students. Provide student a congenial atmosphere to express themselves. Thus teaching and learning can become enjoyable & filled with fun.

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