

# **Traditions and Innovations in English Language Teaching**

**Ms Shweta Patidar**

*School of Comparative Languages and Culture, DAVV, Indore*

## **Abstract**

English language teaching in India started with establishment of the East India Company. It was a rise of cross cultural communication in India. There have been various trends and methodologies of teaching English since the beginning. With the advancement of time, many new methodologies emerged and many old merged with the others. There have been debates on whether or not English should be taught in India. However, despite all the debates and arguments, the importance of the global link language English cannot be denied. To acquire good language and communication skills, command over all the four skills of language i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing is utmost necessary. For developing the mentioned language skills a particular methodology of teaching English cannot suffice. This paper aims at discussing various innovations that can be incorporated in various methodologies of English language teaching.

**Key words:** *English Language Teaching, Methodologies, GTM, CALL, MALL, CLT.*

**Introduction:** English, being a link language, is being spoken and learnt all around the globe. Boom in the computer technology and internet further increased the use of English. Maximum data on internet is available in English language. Seeing the advancement of English, it is being given importance and the scope of English language teaching has risen. English has been taught in India since the very early time when Britishers entered with the motive of establishing East India Company. In trading they felt an urgent need to learn Indian languages so that they could reach the people and could establish the roots of their company. But it was certainly not easy for them to learn Indian languages as India has a rich heritage of languages and dialects. It was then decided to teach English to Indian people. They made the use of existing Indian education system and sought help from upper class Brahmins who were looking after educational affairs. It was then the English language teaching embarked in India. There came many methodologies of teaching English as a second language. Some of them proved to be very useful and yielded great results and some left less impression therefore vanished with time or merged with others. Earlier

English was taught only for understanding the foreign language, but today when English has been crowned as a queen language and most of the world business is conducted in English as a common language, it demands completely new aspects of language and those are not getting fulfilled by traditional methodologies. Hence, the introduction of new methodologies is the demand of the time.

**Need of the Hour:** English is recorded as an associated language of official work in India. It is a link language not only at international levels but also at national levels as we have a vast variety of languages and dialects. A link language is needed that can connect lingual diverse region especially in present time when business is expanding wide and there is frequent cross-cultural communication. To fulfil the purpose of communication a learner must have command over all the four basic skills of language i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, and writing. Hence, there is an urgent need to upgrade our education policies and methodologies of teaching English as a second language.

### **Methodologies of English Language Teaching:**

1. Grammar Translation Method:
2. Teaching English through Literature
3. Computer Assisted Language Learning
4. Mobile Assisted Language Learning
5. Communicative Language Learning

#### **1. Grammar Translation Method:**

GTM method of teaching English is a traditional methodology. It is being used since very long. The method focuses on grammar structure and translation from targeted language to native language and vice versa. It is a cross lingual method. (Umesh T. Agham) It requires an intense practice and some sort of rote learning as a learner has to mug up vocabulary and memorize grammar rules. It is expected from a learner that if he knows rules and lexis he can speak fluently in the targeted language.

The method holds a learner back in communicative aspects of language as it is devoid of communicative activities. A learner might be excellent while translating on paper but when it comes to communicate, they shiver and find it difficult to face the situation.

### **1.1.What needs to be done:**

Grammar translation method works well with students who do not have exposure to English speaking environment since the beginning of their education and they are generally Hindi medium students. These students have learned English as a course only and have only dealt with theoretical language. These students particularly cannot be expected to suddenly participate in communicative activities in the classroom. Their fear to face audience is natural as they never have been in such situations. For the solution there can be held communicative exercises especially designed for such students. Activities such as story-telling, speech, recitation of poems etc can be organized to make students familiar with spoken activities and to boost their confidence. For very low performing students translation with different patterns, quick translations and narration of their translated work can be held.

## **2. Teaching English through Literature:**

Language and literature are two closely related fields. Literature is a composition of language and the language used in the literature is up to a level. Literature can also imbibe moral and cultural values in students. Using literature in the classroom is very lively and entertaining. It has variety of topics that can grasp everyone's attention and keep their attention bound in activities.

2.1. Activities that can be used while teaching through Literature:

2.1.1. Pre-reading Activities:

Pre-reading sessions can arouse students' interest in the work offered. It gives students an idea about the piece of work they are going to read and further grabs their attention and curiosity. Pre-reading activities may include activities such as discussion on title of the work, students can be asked to go through the book reviews or book summary easily available on the internet.

2.1.2. While-reading Activities:

During reading sessions, the style of writing, new words, sentence structure, vocabulary etc can be discussed. Students can be asked to mark unfamiliar structures, words or expressions that can be discussed later with the group or the class.

#### 2.1.3. Post-reading Activities:

Post reading activities may include descriptions of the characters read with especial focus on negative qualities of positive characters and positive qualities of negative characters, turning points in the work chosen, writing styles of the writer and so on.

### **3. Computer Assisted Language Learning:**

Computer Assisted Language Learning, abbreviated as CALL, refers to the use of computer for language learning and teaching. CALL can be applied through audios, videos, word processing, tutors, problem solving exercises, presentation and internet applications.

Computers also help teachers as a reliable assistant. It saves time and efforts of the teachers and can ease their work. They can also engage students in absence of the teacher. CALL can work for developing all the four skills of language as it contains all sorts of exercises. There are a number of exercises/activities that can be incorporated with CALL:

- a. Listening Comprehension
- b. Reading Comprehension
- c. PPT Presentation
- d. Quiz / Puzzles
- e. Crossword Puzzles
- f. Pronunciation
- g. Spelling Correction etc

### **4. Mobile Assisted Language Learning:**

Language learning that is promoted through hand held mobile devices is called mobile assisted language learning. These mobile devices include mobile phones, PDA's, MP3-MP4 players, iPods, iPhones etc. The main characteristics of these devices are their easy portability and connectivity which make them easy to access anywhere and anytime. Connectivity to internet and social media has also increased chances of exposure to the

English speaking people. One can be connected with many people who are native speakers of English language resulting in improving students' communication skills.

The teachers' role in MALL is of a facilitator who can facilitate students with appropriate material, and can support them technically. A learner has to be self motivated for learning. These are non-classroom material and students have to work on their own.

There are a number of foreign language learning apps available on play store through which language learning can be supported. The followings are some of the ways through which MALL can be incorporated in language teaching:

- I. SMS based learning
- II. Games based Learning
- III. Learning through audios and videos
- IV. Language learning apps
- V. Learning through social media

MALL technology is very useful for non-classroom learning because this attracts new generation and who is already fond of using social media, playing games on internet, watching movies from Hollywood, listening to songs etc. Using their interest as an advantage to teach English can give desired results. The only need is to draw a logical relationship between their interest and learning. It will also help in promoting a healthy competitive environment as students can work in groups or can share their progress with their peers.

## **5. Communicative Language Teaching:**

CLT is a modern approach of English language teaching. It has been introduced in response to the present needs of language learning for different communicative purposes. The method supports the notion that the basic purpose of a language is communication and grammatical competence is secondary. Grammar is hence taught explicitly.

This method requires willingness and active participation on the part of a student. Different activities such as One minute speech, Role play, Story-telling, Story completion, Group discussion, Debate, Mock interviews etc can be held to improve communicative faculty in students and to boost their confidence. Grammar is not taught implicitly but grammatical

errors are corrected during or after the conduction of activities. After a time and sufficient practice grammar can be focus on.

Activities need to be held on regular basis in the classes. What is faced sometimes as a challenge in the classroom is the number of students present in the class. Many classes contain around 60 students that is not an ideal ratio of teachers and students. Studies have supported that teaching is most effective with 40:1 ratio. However, if the number of students present in the class is high, students can be divided into groups and can be given group activities but again the focus of teacher will be divided to groups and they might not be supported the way they need. It badly affects the quality of teaching.

Communicative language teaching promotes conduction of activities regularly in the classroom so that students can have sufficient practice of speaking, listening and communicating. The more they practice the more they will learn. It would also give colours to the class as there are different topics on different interest of students and while in conversation there come so many new ideas from young minds that can provoke their thinking process. It also provides a healthy environment of competition in the classroom that encourage students who are otherwise shy and hold themselves back from participating in such activities.

### **Conclusion:**

Learning and mastering all the skills of language i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing is the demand of the time. And teaching merely grammatical structure and rules can not develop communicative faculty in students. Hence it is necessary to provide students with what they need. No methodology of teaching is the best and works every time, with everyone. A teacher has to be wise enough to jump between available methodologies and sometimes strike a balance between two or more. It is only a teacher who can choose what is the best for their students and how can they be benefitted. Students also need to take initiative and should be willing to participate in the activities otherwise only a teacher cannot work a miracle.

Clearly, no methodology alone is the best. They needed to be selected, rejected or sometimes merged as per the requirement. Presence of mind of the teacher can yield the best results among all the available methodologies.

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