

Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to describe the teaching and learning methods of English as a foreign or second language. Teaching of English as a foreign language not only take place in India but also in other English-speaking countries for those who are immigrated to foreign countries for work or any other reasons. There are many teaching and learning techniques involved to make English language as a simple one. Teaching techniques such as Communicative language teaching, Situational language teaching, Task based language teaching. Learning techniques like Community language learning, Cooperative language learning, Total physical response, Audio lingual method, etc., The acronym for teaching of English as foreign language (TEFL) is Teaching English as a Second language (TESL). English language is a non-native language and it can be understood only with the help of some activities such as Drill activities, conducting puzzles, quiz, etc., Language teachers should give some practice to students through interaction to one another and correcting errors and grammatical mistakes which will be easier to the students to capture the techniques of English language.

Keywords: Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Teaching methods, Language learning, Language techniques, Interactive method.

English as an International language:

English is considered an International language because it is spoken in all parts of the globe. It is used as a medium of communication among the nations of the world. It is an official language in England, the USA, Australia, Canada and many nations of Africa. It is an associate official language in India. Though in some countries like Japan and Russia, their respective languages are the media of communication and instruction and though one who speaks only English will find himself at a loss in

European nations other than England, English still retains its importance throughout the world. Thus, English is considered an international language.

The reasons are:

- a) It is used in international communication
- b) It is the language of commerce and trade
- c) It is the medium of expression in science and technology
- d) It is the official state language of many nations

The Place of English in India

English is the most widely distributed of all the languages of the world. It is spoken by more than 300 million people. This language had its beginnings 1500 years ago. The language spoken between 45 A.D. and 1100 A.D. is called Old English, and that spoken between 1100 and 1500 is called Middle English. Modern English dates from 1500 to the present.

English was introduced in India by the British. It was the only official language of communication in the British Empire. Macaulay's Minutes and Wood's Dispatch recommended the use of English as medium of instruction in schools. But soon a majority of schools at the secondary level opted for the vernacular medium. However, they retained English as one of the subjects. The medium of instruction continued to be English and even today it is the language of instruction in colleges and universities throughout the country. English is considered a second language in India. It is no more a foreign language. The major factors for the growing importance of English in India are the development of science and technology, communication, global trade and the Internet.

English as a Foreign Language

Teaching English as a Foreign Language, or TEFL, as it is most commonly referred, involves teaching English as a foreign language in countries where English is not the primary language. It is important to understand that TEFL is different from TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), in that TEFL educators teach English abroad, while English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers educate non-native English Language Learners located within the U.S. However, TEFL educators may find that the acronym TESOL are often used abroad to describe TEFL. Teaching English as a foreign language involves being able to convey the English Language in an articulate and interesting manner. TEFL educators encourage students to improve their English skills through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TEFL is often facilitated through the use of course

books, audio-visual aids, and technology- based materials. In addition to formal instruction, informal exercises such as role-play and language games are often used. Typical activities for TEFL teachers include:

- Planning, preparing and delivering lessons
- Providing feedback on oral and written work
- Administering examinations and other assessments
- Creating and writing materials

ELT, ESL, EFL

The methods of teaching English depend on several factors. The most important of all is the purpose for which English is used in a country. If English is used for limited purposes such as international travel, international trade and commerce, higher education in a country, it is a foreign language in that country (EFL). If, on the other hand, English is used for more purposes than these, in the fields such as international banking, media, government administration and personal communication among the people in a country, it is a second language in that country (ESL). In other words if English is used for a few purposes and by a few people in a country, it is an EFL country, for example, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Japan, China; if it is used by more people and for more purposes in a country, it is an ESL country, for example, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Nigeria. The methods of English Language Teaching (ELT) differ from in ESL countries and EFL countries, because the purposes of teaching English in these two situations are different. So, being an Indian we considered English language as our Second language in our schools and colleges.

Variety of Approaches in Teaching and Learning English Language

In English language teaching, there are three traditional approaches, four communicative approaches and three innovative approaches to language teaching. Traditional language teaching involves Grammar Translation method, Direct Method, Audio-lingual Method. Communicative language teaching involves Communicative Approach, Total Physical Response, Natural Approach and Competency-Based Approach. Finally, Innovative language teaching involves Silent Way, Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia.

Grammar Translation Method was popularized by the Scholars like Karl Plotz, Meidinger, Ahn and Ollendorf in the 18th century. The main feature of this method is Grammar rules are important

for learning a language and so they are taught directly in the English classes. When we translate the methods and techniques of Grammar into our nearby native language then it will be easy for the learners to understand the uses of Grammar.

The Direct Method is a non-translation method. It has oral teaching as an important component. At the first stage, auditory and vocal skills are taught. In the second stage further practice in listening and speaking is given. And in the final stage, since the pupils would have acquired the fair mastery of the language skills, literature is introduced.

Audio-lingual method had its origin in the USA. This was also known as Army Method, which was used in the USA very successfully to teach soldiers foreign languages within a short time on a programme called the Army Specialized Training Programme and so there was a great demand for English teaching personnel. The main feature of this method is the spoken as well as written forms of English are important; so all the four skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing- are paid attention to, though the oral skills have priority over the others.

The *Communicative Approaches* have come into practice in the 1960s. The basic principle of this approach is language is a means of communication, meaning is more important than structures. Learning a language means understanding and using it when the need arises. Learning is not habit forming but it involves the learner's mind. So, the learner using the language is involved in mind-engaging activities. There should be a kind of interaction in the classroom between the teachers and the learners.

Total Physical Response is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action. It attempts to teach language through physical activity. The natural approach shares with TPR an emphasis on exposing the learner to hearing and understanding the language before requiring the learner to speak.

The natural approach was proposed by *Krashen* and *Terrell* whose main features are the Comprehension precedes production, i.e. learners should be given opportunities in the class to listen before they are asked to speak as only through listening they can develop their speaking skills. If the listening skills for the students have been developed then the speaking skills are developed consecutively. So classroom activities should be understandable to the learners.

Competency Based Approach focuses on acquiring life coping skills while developing the language to perform these skills. This approach is based on theories of adult learning which state that for effective learning to take place, adults need to know that the lessons they are studying will improve their lives. The approach has been developed and applied in the United States to help immigrants and refugees learn English and life skills at the same time. It is also used in vocational training.

In the *Silent way* learners are actively responsible for their own learning. Learning a language is not seen as a process of habit formation, as is advocated by the audio-lingual method, but rather a process whereby the learner discovers the rules of the target language and then applies those rules to understand and use the language. In other words, learning is more effective if learners discover the rules for themselves, rather than just remembering and repeating what is to be learned. A basic premise of the Silent Way is that the teacher should talk as little as possible and should encourage the learner to speak as much as possible. Mistakes are considered as part of the process of discovering the rules, and the teacher should not interfere in this process.

Community language learning has the main aim to involve the learner's whole personality. Affective and intellectual well-being are given equal weight. Being sensitive to the learner's fears, the teacher can turn the negative energy of those fears into positive energy and enthusiasm for learning. The relationships between the teacher and learner and between the learner's themselves, take on great importance. It is in the hands of the teachers in shaping the future of the students.

Suggestopedia was founded by *Georgi Lozanov*, believes that language learning can be made more efficient if the psychological barriers to learning are lowered. He believes that learners raise these barriers and limit themselves because of a fear of failure. In order to make better use of learner's capabilities, Lozanov has developed a process of "desuggestion", which he has applied to language learning. This process is designed to promote a relaxed frame of mind and to convert learner's fears into positive energy and enthusiasm for language learning.

In this way, foreign language learners should have their own involvement in learning the second or foreign language. The most important thing to keep in mind is every learner should be aware of their own environment while learning the foreign language as the environment should be stress-free.

Only then the learner could easily acquire their target language. The above methods are very much useful for both the teachers and the learners to acquire their foreign language.

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