REVIEW ARTICLE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

As India is a developing country and the status of English is second language the teaching of English has become a real challenge right from the beginning of the history of English language teaching till date and the teachers have been introducing new methodologies and the trends kept changing.

Due to the association with the British, English started in India with the status of foreign language and much hated language. Today it has become a status symbol for the upper class. In the 20th century English language started emerging as a global language and the Indian classroom environment also changed based on the needs of the learner.Through this paper I would like to discuss the various trends in language learning.

INTRODUCTION

Many theories about learning and teaching of languages have been proposed from a historical perspective and many changes have been brought in the language teaching methodologies based on the needs of the learner. The search for creativity /innovations to find more efficient and effective Ways of teaching languages went on throughout the 20th century. From the origin of English Language Teaching there are many trends that have taken place. The teaching methodology has been changing the teachers; academicians started practicing different methodologies like the grammar translation method, the bi-lingual method, the direct method, the audio lingual method, and the communicative approach. All these are the conventional methods of teaching.

The grammar translation method is still one of the most popular and favorite methods of grammar teaching. The direct method became popular at the beginning of the twentieth century and it started to decline because of its difficulty in usage. The audio lingual method did not promote the communicative ability and it gave importance to memorization and drilling, while down grading the role of context and World knowledge in language learning. The bi-lingual method is an easy method because the average English teacher can teach successfully. It provides both fluency and accuracy. In the hands of the unimaginative teacher it may degenerate into a translation method. In the higher classes it is not use full.

These are some of the conventional methods I didn't get into deeper because I would like to focus on the new trends that have become popular. Now the trend in English language teaching is on the communicative approach. The new trends in language teaching are:

- Learning through technology: Technology is the best way to create Language learning. Technology can support the teachers learn the language faster, easier, less painful and more engaging and creates an optimal language learning environment. Learning through technology is with the help of the computers and internet and it provides a good source to the beginner and to the expert educator.

  Text, video, and voice tools have become relatively inexpensive and increasingly easy for educators to use, and they play an important role in creating lessons and communicating with students and fellow teachers. With the help of the C,Ds, or DVDs ,the students are exposed to a wide variety of language items.

- Web based language learning:The language learning by making use of the World Wide Web. The World Wide Web has enhanced the computer assisted language learning by allowing the learners by learning by doing methodology. It can increase the learner motivation by making them highly interactive. WBLL is language learning that involves the use of the Web and exploits Web materials, resources, applications or tools (Son, 2007).it contains a list of pre created activities for grammar, vocabulary, reading and listening and task based web activities that can be used by the students. The learners find it very interesting and easy to learn through Various internet communication tools, such as e-mail, blog, chat rooms.

Internet as resourse for language learning: Lot of teaching material is available on the internet. To find the material click on the tool box,get into the search engines like Google or yahoo type the name of the topic or the title and click On the button the site gets opened.If the exact address of the website is not known you can just type the key words or there are a variety of tools available we can make use of them. Internet as a resource tool is a motivator,activator,keeps the information up to date,its affordable.some parts of the sites are even affordable in their mothertongue. The disadvantage is it is an invitation to plagiarism.Task based activities can be designed. For ex:

Locating a place

Reading a critique about a movie

Reading a news paper article.

Listening to a piece of information.

Suggested web sites: The courier mail (htpp://couriermail.news.com.au/)

CNN.com (http://www.cnn.com/)

BBC (http://www.bbc.co.uk/)

www.towerofenglish.com

www.english-zone.com

www.britishcouncil.org

www.longman.co.uk

Search Engines:

Google (http://www.google.com/)

Yahoo! (http://www.yahoo.com/)

Web based resources for language learning:

       There are sites like Englishonline.com the most helpful resource for language learning. There we find interactive activities. Teachers find materials for classroom activities and lesson plans. There is a site called simple English Wikipedia .Anybody can contribute to this Wikipedia with simple English language. Consequently, the "Simple English Wikipedia" can be used in the foreign language classroom. Firstly, the students who are at a low level of language proficiency are able to understand the content. Secondly, the need of simple English language gives them the opportunity to contribute actively to the Wikipedia and one can have the satisfaction   that their work is read and appreciated by readers all over the world. "Simple   English   Wikipedia   is   for   everyone!"   For   further   information   see link: http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Drama in ELT http://www.dramainelt.org/

This web site is for all those with an interest in the use of drama in education and theatre techniques in language teaching and learning at primary, secondary and university levels. Using these techniques Role plays can be enacted by the students in the classroom.

E -mail:Email is an easiest way of communication for the students Through this the students can express themselves, improve their writing skills, they will know how to structure their messages, maintain contact groups, build confidence, they know how to keep the messages short. Here the students concentrate more on the ideas then the Structure.

Blogs:A blog is a type of a website or a part of the website.most blogs are interactive.
They allow the visitors to leave a comment and even message each other. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability of readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.
Language learners can use a personal blog linked to a course ,as an electronic portfolio, showing development overtime.

Chat rooms: Communication skills can be improved with the help of the chat rooms, where people can communicate on line.people can send the messages,read and reply to the messages.the chat boxes have pictures and images which can be sent online.All these new procedures help the learners to learn the language with fun which is not found in the regular classroom.

Apart from these we have other ways of language teaching like Language learning through stories: Teaching strategies are needed that enhance students. critical thinking skills, as well as emphasize human caring through student-centered learning approaches. Use of stories in teaching offers exciting possibilities for meeting these desired learning outcomes. Stories can help students reconstruct and reflect on the essence of important experiences. Learning to listen and to hear the core essence of a story, as well as to communicate stories, orally and in writing, are critical skills for all students to acquire.

The art of storytelling has its roots in long-ago traditions of many different cultures. Throughout history, stories were used to communicate important understandings from the past to new generations. It also helps in the maintenance of mental, physical, and spiritual health?

Learning language through advertisements: Students learn the language through advertisements easily because they learn the language actively and use the language in an informal way .it reduces the student's anxiety, stress, creates interest In learning the language. The students can do the activities like describing, role play, expansion, reading, listening while others are talking about it.by giving them a exercise like write the advertisement for a job, the students can

Improve the writing skills. Advertisements can be used to teach various aspects of grammar like tenses, jumbled words, comprehension, prepositions, articles etc. The idea here is to introduce the active listening technique by which the students learn the language faster. For the students it will be a type of entertainment rather than working or studying.

Learning through cartoons Space trash the size of a refrigerator that was expelled from the International Space Station came crashing down and burned up over the ocean in November 2008. Large

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quantities of debris from various space voyages have made travel in space hazardous, and increased the likelihood of some of the jettisoned materials to become a hazard on the ground as well.

Questions:

- What is space trash and how did it come to be?
- Why are we concerned about space trash when it is floating in space?
- Can you think of a way that some of the space trash could be cleaned up?
- Should Space Shuttle missions be required to reclaim some space trash each time they return to Earth?

With the help of the cartoons the students will be able to understand the importance of current events. for activity Explore significant events from the news through an investigation of editorial cartoons.There are sites like www.cagle.com where the **students can log onto the interent & proceed to www.cagle.com &** select editorial cartoons contents page from the left hand navigation column then select editorial cartoons: page from the contents page. Proceed through cartoons pages.

Ask for opinions as to the events depicted. Compare with list of events generated during set.

Direct students to look at Students will look at all editorial cartoons on all the pages & record all the events depicted. Can be done individually or in pairs.Students will write a general description of cartoons for which they are not aware of a specific event.

Homework: Write about the significance of one of the events depicted in the editorial cartoons.Read the News paper and attempt to predict the next recurring topic of editorial cartoons based on their perception of the importance of the stories.

Evaluation: Assessment is taken based on the comprehension of events depicted through discussion and written assignment.

Conclusion

These are few methods I wanted to stress on there are many methods which I may be un aware of. From the merits and demerits of the different methods of teaching foreign language, we can conclude that all the methods can suit all the students, all places and all conditions. Our approach in this regard should be eclectic and pragmatic. Best method should be adopted by the teachers according to their needs. They should select features of any methods, which may be effective in particular circumstances.

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