

भारतीय संस्कृति, शिक्षा और दर्शन

विभिन्न संकल्पनाएं

सम्पादक : डॉ. दिनेश चन्द्र शर्मा

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Teaching Methods and Techniques in English Methodology

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Methods and Techniques of Teaching English

English today is not only a subject in schools and colleges but also a global language that connects people across nations and cultures. Because of its status as an international language, English is used in higher education, science, business, technology, and media. Students who are able to use English confidently often find better opportunities in life. This importance of English makes the task of teaching it both challenging and rewarding. Teaching a language is not just about explaining grammar or giving vocabulary lists. It requires skill, planning, creativity, and all above, a clear choice of methods and techniques. Over the years, different methods have been developed, each based on a particular philosophy of learning. Some emphasize accuracy, some focus on communication, while others try to balance both. A teacher's role is to understand these methods and adapt them to the needs of learners.

This chapter provides a complete comprehensive exploration of the methods and techniques of teaching English. The history of different approaches, analyzes their classroom application and discusses practical techniques that keep learners engaged is traced by it.

The Historical background of English Teaching Methods

The teaching of English, like the teaching of any other language, has evolved with time. In the early 18th and 19th centuries, English was often treated like Latin, a language of scholarship. Lessons centered on the memorization of grammar rules and the translation of literary texts. The spoken dimension of the language received little attention.

However, as international trade expanded and colonial administration required practical communication, the limitations of this rigid model became obvious. People needed English not just to read Milton or Shakespeare, but to buy and sell goods, negotiate treaties, and interact socially. Thus began a series of experiments in method, each shaped by new insights into language, psychology, and pedagogy.

The Grammar–Translation Method dominated classrooms for centuries. Then came the Direct Method, born out of frustration with lifeless translation drills. Later, the Audio-Lingual Method reflected the influence of behaviorist psychology, focusing on repetition and habit. By the late 20th century, Communicative Language Teaching took center stage, emphasizing meaningful interaction. Today, teachers operate in a rich methodological landscape where eclecticism selecting techniques from different traditions has become the most practical approach.

Traditional Methods of English Teaching

1. The Grammar-Translation Method

The grammar-translation method was not based on any theory of language teaching, but its roots can be traced to the way classical languages such as Latin and Greek were taught. It was a way of learning a language through a detailed study of its grammar. The learner then applied the rules of grammar in translating sentences and parts of text from the mother tongue into the target language and vice versa. A distinctive feature of this method was its focus on translating the sentence correctly. Grammatical accuracy was given great importance. Literary texts were the basis of this translation exercise. Vocabulary was taught through bilingual word lists and there was a lot of stress on memorization of words.

In short, listening and speaking were neglected and the skills of reading and writing occupied an important place. In this method the teacher was totally dependent on the text as he/ she had to rigidly follow the lesson with no scope for any innovation. The learner's role was passive; he/she did not play any active role in the use of the language.

2. The Direct Method

As a reaction to the grammar-translation method, the direct method emerged in Europe at the end of the 19th century. This

method was based on the belief that learning a foreign language is similar to learning L1. This method emerged due to the needs of late 19th and early 20th century contexts when international business and travel required people to be able to use and communicate in L2. This method continues to be popular in the elite private schools in India. However, overuse of this method would be detrimental, because it not only rejects the mother tongue of the learners but also puts heavy demands on the teachers. This could be a possible activity conducted in the classroom using the Direct method.

3. The Reading Method

This method was very popular in India soon after independence since English at that time was envisaged to be a library language. Michael West who lived in India for a long time was instrumental in popularizing this method. His new 'method readers' emphasized the importance of the reading skill. West believed that silent reading is the key to proficiency and that exercises in reading comprehension would enable proficiency in speech and writing. Vocabulary was seen as an essential component of reading proficiency. This led to the development of the principles of vocabulary control and resulted in the compilation of 'a general service list of English words'.

This was used as standard reference for developing teaching materials and Readers graded on the basis of vocabulary were created. Only the grammar necessary for reading comprehension was taught. The vocabulary of the early reading passages and texts was strictly controlled for difficulty. An attempt was made by the teacher to expand the vocabulary as quickly as possible, since the acquisition of vocabulary was considered more important than the grammatical skills. English is no longer considered as a library language in India. Therefore, the emphasis on the Reading Method can no longer be considered. However the importance of vocabulary has again taken centre stage in English language teaching learning.

4. The Audio-Lingual Method

The mid-20th century saw the rise of behaviorist psychology, which viewed learning as habit formation. This inspired the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), which trained students through drills, substitution exercises, and pattern practice. This method was one of the methods which was based on the Behaviourist – Structuralist Paradigm. Towards the end of World War-II, the US armed forces

needed to learn foreign languages on a large scale as US soldiers needed to communicate with both their allies as well as the enemy countries where they had been deployed.

The languages taught ranged from European languages such as French and German to East Asian languages such as Japanese and Korean. Approaches, Methods and Techniques in English Language Teaching. This method focused on oral/aural work and pronunciation taught through drills as well as dialogue practice in small groups of motivated learners and native language teachers. Dialogues were the main aspect of the audio-lingual approach as they provided the learners an opportunity to mimic/imitate, practice and memorise bits of language considered to be relevant to their situations.

In fact, the Audio lingual method adapted many strategies of the Direct method, especially the emphasis on the spoken skill. Based on the principle that language learning is habit formation, the method encourages imitation and memorization of set phrases. Structures are taught one at a time using drills. Little or no grammatical explanation is provided. Vocabulary is limited and taught in context. There is use of language laboratories, tapes and visuals.

Modern Approaches to English Teaching

1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The late 20th century marked a significant shift. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) placed communication at the heart of language learning. Grammar was not abandoned, but it was no longer the starting point. Instead, learners engaged in real-life tasks that required them to use English meaningfully—planning a trip, conducting a survey, or discussing social issues.

The classroom became a lively space for pair work, group discussions, and role plays. Mistakes were tolerated as natural steps in learning. The teacher's role shifted from authority to facilitator. The success of CLT lies in its focus on fluency and confidence, though critics argue that it sometimes sacrifices accuracy.

2. The Eclectic Approach

In practice, no single method solves all problems. Many teachers adopt an eclectic approach selecting techniques from different traditions. For example, they may use translation for complex grammar, drills for pronunciation, and communicative activities for fluency. This flexibility respects the diversity of learners

and contexts, ensuring that the classroom remains dynamic.

Teaching the Four Language Skills

1. Listening

Listening is the gateway to language acquisition, yet it often receives the least classroom attention. Techniques for teaching listening include:

- Playing short dialogues or songs and asking comprehension questions.
- “Listen and draw” activities where learners follow oral instructions.
- Note-taking tasks based on short lectures.

These activities sharpen comprehension and prepare students for real-world communication.

2. Speaking

Speaking activities encourage learners to express themselves. Techniques include:

- Role plays such as ordering food in a restaurant.
- Debates on current issues to develop argument skills.
- Pair interviews to simulate real conversations.

The key is to create a supportive environment where mistakes are tolerated, and learners feel free to experiment.

3. Reading

Reading builds vocabulary and comprehension. Techniques include:

- Skimming texts for the main idea.
- Scanning for specific details, such as train timings.
- Reading newspapers, advertisements, or short stories for exposure.

4. Writing

Writing integrates grammar, vocabulary, and creativity. Teachers can guide learners step by step:

- Controlled writing: filling blanks, completing sentences.
- Guided writing: writing short paragraphs with prompts.
- Free writing: essays, letters, or creative stories.

Peer editing and teacher feedback further improve skills.

Classroom Techniques and Activities

- **Storytelling:** Engages imagination and improves vocabulary.
- **Games:** Activities like word bingo or crosswords reduce

anxiety and encourage participation.

- **Projects:** Preparing posters, presentations, or surveys combines language with creativity.

- **Drama and Role Play:** Helps learners step into real-life situations with confidence.

- **Technology Integration:** Using apps, podcasts or online quizzes makes learning relevant in the digital age.

Challenges in English Teaching

Despite the wealth of methods, challenges remain:

- Large classes make individual attention difficult.

- Limited resources restrict interactive activities.

- Learners from rural backgrounds may lack exposure to English outside the classroom.

- Examination systems often reward rote memorization rather than communication.

- Motivation varies; some learners see English only as a compulsory subject.

Practical Solutions

Teachers can adopt creative solutions:

- Use group work to make large classes manageable.

- Encourage peer learning where stronger students support weaker ones.

- Shift focus from rote learning to practical communication.

- Provide feedback that builds confidence rather than fear.

The teaching of English has traveled from rigid grammar drills to flexible communicative approaches. Each method has shaped the way teachers and learners engage with the language. A wise teacher does not worship one method but draws from many, blending them to suit learners' needs. Teaching English is both a science and an art: it requires knowledge of theory, sensitivity to learners and creativity in practice.

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