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# Teaching Approaches of English Communication to the Visual Generation

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## **Abstract:**

*The present generation of students is entirely different from the previous generations we taught. The enhanced technical knowledge especially mobile phones changed the students' perception of reality in a different way. The present generation thinks and communicates in visuals. The present teaching fraternity has to adopt this approach for teaching communication skills with the awareness that visuals are not enough to make lessons attractive. As pictures in mobiles are the most attractive features to students, better teachers understand the applications used by students and then present number of visual activities that make lessons more attractive. This paper focuses on the applications that could completely engage students in learning actively.*

**Key words:** *Communication skills, visual activities, applications etc.*

The present social world is different to the actual world of the previous two decades. Our teaching learning approaches and tools are incompatible to the needs of the present generation. With globalization and its effects on language teaching and learning the semiotic world mirrors the social world in all aspects. Language either in oral or written form is blurring in making the clearest communicative meaning. Speech occurs in coordination with gestures, postures and movement. Writing occurs in coordination with visuals, colour and specific arrangements.

Often speech and writing are partial expressions of the whole composition. If they are partial means of expression certain questions are inevitable for the non-native language trainer, irrespective of its social environment. The first question may be – “if writing is partial in communication, in what ways it is partial?” The second might be “what kind of role do speech and writing take and in what kind of social environments?” The essential third question is “in what ways the forms and degree of partiality similar or different in social usage?” Under these circumstances the English Language trainer's task is highly difficult as well as rewarding. This paper illustrates the tools and techniques for better understanding of these issues in this ever changing and complex world.

## **Image Nation**

Teaching profession is undergoing a tremendous shift to deal with the present generation that is of image nation. To teach to this visual team teachers must be equipped with the apt techniques and apply imagination (image + nation = imagination). Teaching fraternity is experiencing the changed results as well. With certain challenges the present generation has number of tag lines. The most popular ones are selfie generation, digital natives, IGen etc. A teenager has a few hundred photos in his/her mobile phone and most of the time will be on online. Wherever they go they can't restrict from taking selfies. They live in this IMAGE AGE. Does it have any impact on language class? The answer is 'yes indeed'.

Postmodern society has witnessed an increase in the importance given to the visual. These visuals can be effectively used to enhance the communication standards of the students. Bamford defines the necessary set of skills that compose the notion of visual literacy: the ability to visualize internally, read and interpret visual images; the ability to examine the impact that images have on society; and being aware of the manipulative

uses and ideological implications of images. To become more aware of the different meaning conveyed by images, the suitable approach is, understanding syntax and semantics of an image. This includes:

Syntax	Semantics
) Identifying the composition	) Identifying the relation between the image and the outer society
) Describing shapes, colours, and lines	) Understanding assumptions, ideas and the morals that influence the analysis of the photo
) Describing the relation between the text and image	) Understanding the cultural difference that influences the analysis of the individual
) Inferring the intention of colours and combinations	) Understanding how the image relates to issues and cultural values to gain meaning

In the language training class the combination of syntax and semantics is the best way to generate the language rich environment. Analysis of photos elevates the thinking skills. The below quoted tabular column projects the questions that help in the analysis of a photo for enhancing language efficiency.

Syntactical Analysis	Semantic Analysis
) How are the components of the image arranged?	) Who created the image?
) What is the most important component? Why?	) Who is the intended audience of the image?
) How does this influence the way we look at the elements of the image?	) In what context do we see the image? Has anything been altered or included?
) What do the colours say about this image?	) What does the photo say about culture? What are the underlying values and assumptions present in the photo?

### The Role of the Language Trainer

Language trainers need to visualize and select activities that elevate the process of learning. Trainers ought to prepare students to enjoy better life in this image world. We, the teaching fraternity have to make use of television commercials, pamphlets, social media ads that are penetrated in our day today life for the purpose of teaching. Emotions play an important role in teaching and learning. For example if the students are asked to explain a new technology which the trainer is not familiar with, they explain with total involvement and feel appreciated. The trainer takes a different role where he/she is considered as an individual who knew everything. Having the upgraded technology in hand the trainers should understand that knowledge possession is not enough; also the efficacy of this technique in practice.

### Boosting Students' interest

For generations pictures have been used as descriptive tools in course books. They did not support in stimulating emotional conversations. With the changing generations the intention behind picture usage changed. Pictures should make students start discussion, laugh and move. It should create interest. They can be involved in activities by showing the photos that catch our eye and let them imagine the whole scene. If the picture is interesting they don't mind lack of vocabulary, grammatical errors and emotions. One of the greatest tools that can't be ignored is student's mobile phone. Instead of taking mobiles in a negative way we can use them for enhancing their language learning.

The author intends to brief a few activities that are used with the students which were proved beneficial for their learning. One notable feature in this case study is that fifty percent of the students share rural background.

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### Activities implementation

On the specified dates students who have the provision of mobile phones were instructed to bring them and asked to find minimum two photos they had taken during vacation. The students were teamed and they had to go for atleast three questions concerning those pictures selected. Those questions should stimulate extended discussion. One question must be on the emotions in the picture. This activity can be used as a warm up that involves youngsters seriously than the writing description of their vacation.

### Grammar tensions – intermediate level

One of the most difficult part in language training sessions is the correct usage of tense. The difficulty for the students is no doubt the usage of present perfect tense and simple past. For clarity on present perfect tense the method used is:

1. The students were asked to take out their mobile phones and find a picture of smiling or weeping individual. Some may find a woman/a man/a baby.
2. Instructed to show it to their teammates.
3. Instructed to narrate what has happened as a result of which that individual is smiling or weeping.
4. Instructed to use the combination of present perfect and simple past for narration. This can be practiced with some more photos shared with other teammates. It resulted in lot of fun during the activity. It truly engaged students and helped in practicing troublesome grammar structures.

### Practice of ‘Modals’ usage

The problem of the correct usage of modals can be cleared with the activity of description of photos from mobile phones in a different way. At times what the picture does not show becomes more important. Activity instructions are enumerated below:

1. Instructed the students to go to Google images and find several close-ups. For further practice they are asked to take their own close-up photos and start the practice session.
2. They are instructed to guess what it can/may/might/can't be. The task can be extended further with taking up of close-ups of specific objects.
3. Students ought to describe the object in detail.

In these activities students' involvement is high and work is laborious. The usage of language is natural and authentic.

### Test of the super vision

It is more irritating returning home from a celebration of trip with the photos blurred. These photos are of great importance and can be used in classroom activities. With these pictures verbs usage in simple past and past continuous can be practiced in an inquisitive discussion format: like working in teams with different chosen pictures individually and weaving a story connecting all the pictures.

### Other activities

1. **Holiday destinations:** The class is divided into teams of five members each. They were asked to select five holiday destination points and instructed the group to plan their trip in detail for five days. Their task is to check the transportations means and price, accommodation, food, and places worth watching there. The cheapest options win. The teams have to present their preparation using pictures for each and every detail.
2. **Using Printerest charts:** Comparison and contrast of the pictures and charts of the different concepts available online in pairs. The teams have to analyze the pictures in comparison and contrast and convey their understanding in a more attractive way.
3. **Activity based on films:** The student teams were asked to prepare the favourite list of films of the team members to spend their evening with the selected one movie of the team members together. After

selecting the movies of their individual choice they have to convince the remaining teammates using wide range of vocabulary and multiple grammar structures on why they have to enjoy that specific movie with that specific genre.

4. **Social media Posts:** Every day millions of people read and post information and photos adding comments. Some of them might have been done by the author's students. Consider that the topic that is going to be covered is friendship: Students are emotionally attached to this physically, psychologically, geographically and emotionally diversified concept. Students discuss the similarities and contrast of how people take it all over the world. Friends together photos can be provided and asked to describe the photos with tag lines. In this the adjectives and adverbs are to be rightly used in elevating the meaning of the verbs used in the description.

### Conclusion

In the present global education scenario the syllabus prescribed by the board, the teachers and the course books might not be adequate to satisfy the learning needs of the students. Mauchline aptly quotes, "sound and image is where it all begins." The fact is that as a mentor and motivator of learners the vision of the students must be exploited. According to Jones "the power of an image often doesn't lie in the image itself, but in its ability to trigger images and stories in the minds of our students and create a need and desire to communicate."

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