The Effectiveness of Using the Eclectic Method within the Second Language Classroom in the Sri Lankan context

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Abstract

Teaching and learning are two broad concepts that can be subjected to deep analysis. In accordance with the hypothesis made, it is essential to prepare for a lesson and be armed with a suitable strategy to impart knowledge such as the Eclectic Method. As a result of the researches carried out by Li, Freeman, Melloa, Osakine, Onijin, Atkinson, Falana and et al, it is disadvantageous to resort to the use of a single teaching methodology while a variety of strategies are available. Thus the best elements of all these methods can be incorporated in the Eclectic Method, aiming an effective teaching-learning experience. The lack of research work on the effectiveness of using the Eclectic Method within the local context, has paved way for the current study. Consequently, 500 learners and 40 educators were selected from the Sangabodhi National College and University of Colombo while the questionnaire method, informal discussions, interviews and observations are used for data collection. Amidst the unavoidable limitations such as the limited scope and data range, the hypotheses are proved, and it is also found out that a combination of structural and communicative aspects in teaching is consciously or unconsciously used, suggesting the use of the Eclectic Method within the local L2 classroom in varying degrees. However, the identified common combinations used for the Eclectic Method seem to be unsatisfactory and suggestions are made through the current study, further highlighting the advantage of resorting to the Eclectic Method, while paying significant attention to interesting, effective and different styles of combining structural and communicative aspects in teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Research

In the process of learning, there are several important factors to be considered and the role of the teacher is one such vital concern. In order to facilitate the learning process of students, a teacher needs to be prepared for the teaching session with an appropriate procedure or a methodology. A language teaching method is clarified by Nunan (2003) as "a single set of procedure which teachers follow in a classroom … based on a set of beliefs about the nature of language and learning". According to Richards and Rodgers (1982, 1985) a method is "an umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice" which is encompassed of an "approach, design and procedure". Approach refers to the "beliefs and theories about language", design refers to the "function of teaching materials" and procedure concerns with "the techniques and practices employed in a classroom" (ibid).

Even though a variety of teaching methods can be discerned, it is problematic whether the use of a single teaching methodology in a classroom is effective. As human beings learn and understand concepts in different ways, a teacher can not base his teaching only on one method. Further more, the disadvantages of the usage of a single teaching methodology have been pointed out by several researchers and academics such as Li, Cruz, Freeman, Melloa, Osakine, Onijin and Falana. However, in using the Eclectic method, several teaching methods are combined, aiming an effective teaching and learning experience.

Research Scope, Objectives and Hypothesis

In examining the effectiveness of the use of the Eclectic Method at the secondary and tertiary level, 250 students from a reputed school in the researcher's area and 250 undergraduates from the University of Colombo are used. Hypothesizing that the use of the Eclectic Method is better than using a single teaching methodology, the study attempts to answer questions such as the significant role played by a teaching methodology in teaching a second language, what are the commonly adopted methodologies, what methods interest students to learn English and is a combination of structural and communicative approaches to teaching suitable for students. Further more, it is expected to examine whether there is a difference in the attitudes towards the teaching methods, when a single teaching method is used and when a combination of methods are utilized.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A plethora of researches have been done on Applied Linguistics in different contexts, which shed light to the current research.

Evolution of Teaching Methods

It is commonly believed that debate and developments around the methods of language teaching and learning have been ongoing since the time of Comenius in the 17th century, if not before (Rocha, 2012). In the recent past, language learning and the usage of specific teaching methods became popular especially after the II World War, with the great social and political demand that arose with regard to learning second languages. When specific attention is paid to the history of English language teaching, it can be discerned that numerous approaches have been used to expedite and ease language learning.

Up to late 1960 s, traditional approaches of teaching gave prominence to "grammatical competence as the basis of language proficiency (Richards, 2006). However, in 1970 s, a reaction to traditional language teaching approaches took place and "the centrality of grammar in language teaching and learning was questioned" as a result of the understanding that "language ability involved much more

than grammatical competence" and simultaneously the attention was paid to knowledge and skills needed to use language for varied communicative functions (ibid). Thus, old methods such as Audio-lingualism and Situational Approach lost their status while new methods were introduced.

Gradually with the arrival of the "post – method era", since 1980 s, "a shift in language pedagogy, away from the single method concept as the main approach to language teaching" can be identified as a result of the failure to find out any prominent advantages of using one teaching method over another, by researchers (Thornbury 2009). Thus, the current trend of using the Eclectic Method or the use of an appropriate mixture of various methods came into being.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Prevailing Individual Teaching Methods

In order to identify an effective combination of methodologies, it is important to be aware of both pros and cons of the individual teaching methods. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was the standard method of learning foreign languages such as Latin in the 19th century. The method focused on the technique of translation and students were supposed to gain knowledge of morphology and syntax and improve reading and writing skills by remembering relevant rules while no due recognition was given to spoken abilities which are needed in real life contexts. The teacher in such a context often explains a grammatical rule, with some example sentences including a bilingual word list to be studied by the students and consequently such classes are conducted in the student's first language without providing ample opportunities to be exposed to the target language targeting language acquisition.

Cognitive - Code, in which over- emphasis of learning takes place, is also seen as a method "similar to the grammar translation method except that it focuses on developing all the four skills of language". Though both these methods assist students to learn the basic grammar of a language and practice it and though the organization of the class is easy, these efforts can be tedious for a learner as in most cases, students are only "passive path followers" and it is better to combine such methods with some other interesting activities that provide variety and entertainment for the students to learn in a low stress level classroom.

During the latter part of the 19th century, the Direct Method (DM) emerged with the idea that "language could be taught through demonstration and action" and target language was used as the medium of instruction in order to give students a thorough knowledge of "pronunciation, grammar, speech and listening comprehension". Even though it was the initial step taken to "abandon the first language as the frame of reference", the method was criticized as a result of its "overemphasis on the

similarities between first language acquisition and second language learning" and due to the exhausted role that has to be played by the teacher (Lee 2012).

Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby introduced the Situational Language Teaching Approach (SA) during 1920 s and 1930 s of which the special attribute is that new language items should be introduced and practiced situationally and not in isolation and also "material is taught before it is presented in written form" as language learning is believed to be a "habit formation" (Li 2012).

Audio-lingual Method (ALM) introduced in the mid - fifties (1964), is another traditional methodology based on dialogues which contain the grammar and vocabulary that the particular lesson focuses on and students are required to mimic the dialogue, memorize it, go through drilling, repetition and reinforcement to be thorough with the grammatical structure and vocabulary introduced, while ignoring the creativity in a language (Wilson 2012).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) came in to being with the target of making "communicative competence the goal of language teaching". Being based on the theory of "language as communication" where language is believed to be "a tool for communication", the teacher only acts as a "facilitator" in the communication process while the students learn within a "co-operative atmosphere" (Li 2012). Even though classes which are based on this methodology are very interesting and live, the students with a lower level of grammatical knowledge would find it difficult to develop perfect communicative competence smoothly in such a context in which, the students' current knowledge of language affects the success of his communicative process.

Total Physical Response (TPR) designed by James Asher is based on a structural view of language and is based on three learning hypotheses: "first and second language learning are almost same, language is learnt through actions via right – brain and absence of stress is the key for successful language learning" (Li 2012). According to this approach, lessons start with drills while students are provided with a chance to enjoy classroom activities which will enable effective learning and speech production is postponed until the proper time comes.

The Silent Way (SW) designed by Caleb Gattegno highlights the importance of the teacher being silent while the students are given ample opportunities for the production of language. Consequently, autonomy and self-learning abilities of the students will increase while they are engaged in problem solving activities to which the teacher directs them (Li 2012).

Community Language Learning (COL) forwarded by Charles A. Curren is, before the teacher explains the relevant grammar points, students talk about interesting topics and the "knower" or the teacher will provide vocabulary assistance as well as the conversations made are tape – recorded to

be used to review in order to learn from them (Li 2012). However the lack of a syllabus becomes an issue for the complete effectiveness of this method.

In 1983, Tracy Terrell and Stephen Krashen introduced the Natural Approach (TNA) or the intuitive immersion method which is based on the natural way of acquiring a mother tongue by young children. Input which is a bit beyond the level of the learner is presented before speech ability arrives and then during "the pre – production stage" students will only listen and try to grasp the target language, but single words are produced during "the early – production stage" which lead to "the speech – emergent phase" in which students are engaged in communicative activities (Li 2012). Even though this method enables language acquisition of the students to a certain extent, the way grammar is dealt with can be identified as a weakness of this approach.

Georgie Lozanov who was influenced by Yoga and Psychology believed that learning happens successfully at a relaxed moment and introduced Suggestopedia (S) (Li 2012). In such a learning situation, learners act as infants in front of adult authority represented by the teacher and dialogues gain prominence in learning while classrooms are decorated and background music is also used to cater to the emotional requirements of learners. Moreover, the emergence of an internet age has awakened the use of E – communication or being exposed to a language through social groups and chat rooms and the use of computers and other technological apparatus which enable language learning (TECH). In addition, Total Immersion Method (TIM) "immerses the student directly and immediately in the target language" from the very beginning of teaching but it can be tedious learning for a weak student (2013). Thus the literature and the researcher's experience make it evident that, successful results cannot be guaranteed through the use of a single method, and that the best approach would be to resort to the Eclectic Method, considering learner requirements and aims.

The Eclectic Method (ECLC)

As indicated by Atkinson who tried to recommend ECLC in teaching through his research (1988), no one who is aware of psychology and art of teaching would recommend a "monolithic model" of teaching. One of the main reasons for experimenting on the use of ECLC is the revelation that various students learn and understand concepts by different means, as students can be visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners. Consequently a teacher has to adopt a combination of methods to cater to all types of learners and to maintain interest in the lesson. With this kind of an understanding researchers have developed different Eclectic Approaches highlighting several methodologies.

Cruz's ECLC consists a combination of the DM, ALM, S and TPR, utilizing all the benefits these teaching methodologies offer (Acevedo 2006). However, ECLC can not be thus restricted, when numerous methods which can be artistically combined in a classroom are available. Thus, going

beyond the research format of Cruz, the present research attempts to suggest the effectiveness of combining a variety of methods, following a coherent procedure. Here, the ideas of Freeman and Mellow become vital as they indicate the importance of combining structural and communicative approaches in teaching.

Freeman and Mellow (2000) who refer to "principled eclecticism", have proved the significance of mixing structural approaches with communicative use of language (Shakir 2011). For instance structure of the language, traditional reading, writing and conversational activities are included in one lesson while the learner's role is cooperative and the teacher acts as a facilitator.

Thus, as Li has also correctly mentioned, "monotonous activities can never keep students highly motivated and only various activities catch their attention", hence; identifying and recommending the best combination for an effective use of the Eclectic Method is of high value. Consequently, following Freeman, Mellow, Li and et.al. the current research attempts to examine the effectiveness of using ECLC which combines both structural and communicative methods of teaching a second language.

Sample Population and Methodology

A sample population of 500 students who learn English at secondary and tertiary levels, is used for this research. From the total number, 250 students are from a reputed school in the researcher's area referred to as the Sangabodhi National College (125 students from Grade 12 and 125 students from Grade 13), covering the secondary level. Similarly 250 undergraduates from the University of Colombo have been chosen from both Arts and Management faculties (125 1st year Arts students and 125 1st year Management students). Furthermore, 20 English teachers and 20 lecturers have also been questioned and interviewed, in order to enrich the research.

The students chosen for the study, have sat for the O/L G.C.E. exam and have passed the English test, showing a considerable amount of English language knowledge as required by a student of that age. The undergraduates chosen for the study are also newly recruited ones to the university after their secondary education and these undergraduates are in a lower level in the English proficiency Course. Thus, the two categories of the sample population seem to be in a closely related situation with regard to their language proficiency and their ideas with regard to effective teaching methodologies are reviewed and analyzed in this study. Questionnaires, informal discussions, interviews and observations were used in order to gain the data for this research work and the data was analyzed in order to gain valid conclusions.

DATA ANALYSIS

An effective teaching methodology – Perception of the educators

The selection of an effective teaching methodology and prior preparation for a lesson can be identified as two prominent factors in teaching. The responses to the questionnaire survey given by the educators endorse this fact. According to the responses given to question number 03 in the questionnaire that asks whether teachers and lecturers think that selecting a suitable methodology in advance is required, 19 school teachers out of 20, state that it is essential to select a relevant teaching strategy and prepare for the lesson, before stepping into the classroom. The data collected from university lecturers further validate this point as all the 20 lecturers who were questioned have affirmatively answered for question number 03. By giving prominence to the selection of an effective teaching methodology and for prior preparation for a lesson, most of the teachers target the realization of lesson objectives. Meantime, a relaxed classroom atmosphere where the teacher is confident in teaching is assured while trust is established between the teacher and student. That means, if there is proper preparation in advance, the educator is not stressed by being worried about what to teach and how to teach, and it would also enable him to be more confident and creative in the class, while winning the hearts of the learners.

Though this kind of an understanding about the theoretical background with regard to teaching is depicted by the majority of both parties, 05 school teachers have frankly pointed out that, sometimes the familiarity of the lesson which is resulted by years of teaching the same material and the overconfidence it brings, make them perceive prior preparation for a class as unnecessary. However, as one of the lecturers has accurately indicated, "how much ever we are thorough with a lesson, a proper layout of the day's lesson which is up to date is essential" and "the preparation of the same lesson varies, depending on the level of students and the new classroom context". Moreover, it is extremely important to evaluate the methods used for teaching, before repeating the same lesson in the same manner.

In considering another example, informant number 02 who is a school teacher has uttered that preparation is needed, but she would use her own preferred method. This answer questions the capacity of understanding of this teacher who has been teaching for 20 years. The reason is, it cannot be deemed as correct to follow our own preferred methods in teaching, basing on reasons such as our ease in teaching or believing that this particular method is suitable as it is what I have been using in teaching throughout the time.

There are few other factors to be considered here such as the class, context, time period, number of students, type of lesson, lesson objectives and the most suitable strategy to be used to impart the knowledge targeted by the lesson. For example, when the target of a particular lesson, is to build up the confidence of the L2 learner in talking, it is not very suitable to do a 01 hour or 02 hour class on writing a draft of a speech. That would obviously assist the students, but the teacher should be tactful enough to introduce some strategies to make the students talk at least a few words, without being afraid. Thus, it is evident that the selection of a proper teaching method and prior preparation for a lesson are requisites for a successful teaching–learning experience.

Commonly used methodologies – Perception of the educators

In considering the commonly used teaching methodologies by teachers and lecturers, the practical aspect with regard to the use of teaching strategies within the L2 classroom and the preferences and choices of the teachers and lecturers with regard to suitable teaching strategies can be understood to a great extent. Through questionnaire data, it is identified that both parties use the mentioned techniques in quite a similar way. For example, the rates of usage of GTM, CLT and COT are equal.
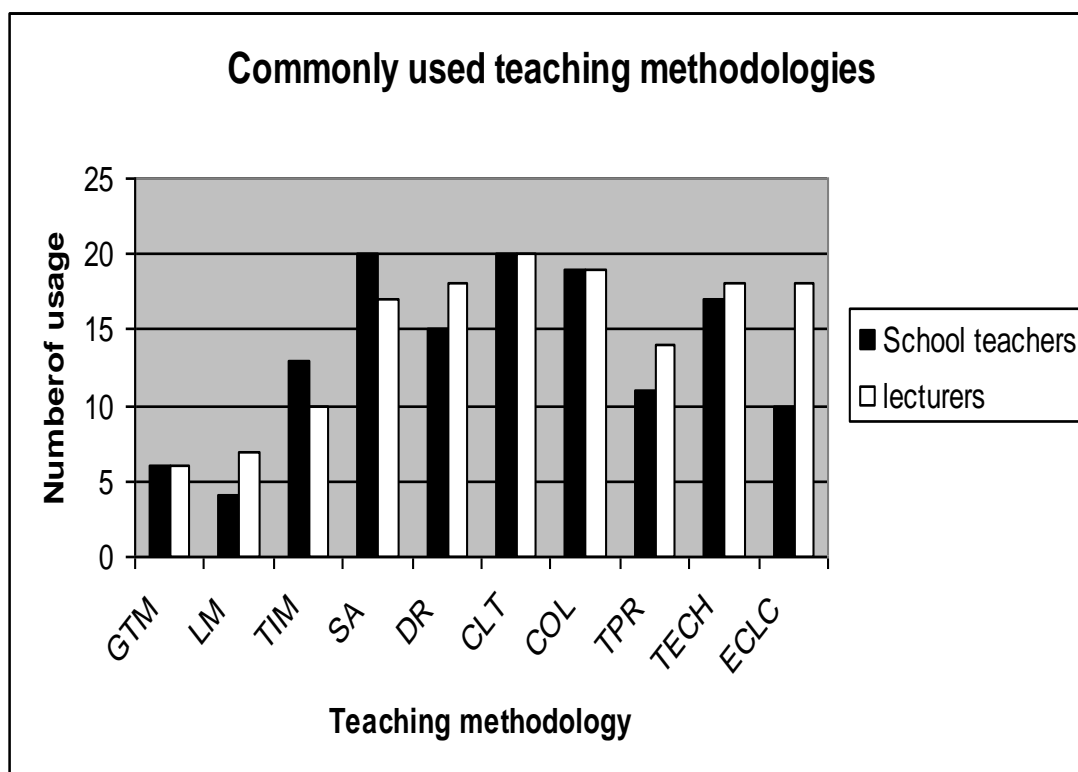

Figure i

In further analyzing this chart, several highly used strategies can be recognized which represent either the preference of the teachers and lecturers or the method they are advised to use by relevant educational authorities. School teachers tend to use SA (20), CLT (20) and COL (19) commonly while most of the lecturers tend to use CLT (20), COL (19) as well as DR (18), TECH (18) and ECLC (18). Referring to these statistics it can be concluded that both teachers and lecturers seem to use a combination of structural and communicative aspects in teaching, consciously or unconsciously, suggesting the use of ECLC within the classroom in varying degrees.

The use of a combination of structural and communicative methods can be discerned as a better option than resorting to the single use of either a structural or theory based methodology or solely using a communicative approach.

Satisfaction level with regard to the currently used teaching methods

The data prove that 33 teachers and lecturers are either completely or to a certain extent satisfied with the currently used teaching methodologies in schools and universities as they believe that students are able to improve their language skills through these strategies. However, 19 (9 teachers and 10 lecturers) seem to hold a different view. Even though, the majority of school teachers and lecturers prefer to use ECLC within the L2 classroom, practical barriers against the complete implementation of it hinder 100% effectiveness. Consequently, 07 informants (03 school teachers and 04 lecturers) totally refuse to be satisfied with the currently used teaching strategies, throwing light to the fact that there is an issue with regard to the teaching methods used at the moment.

According to the data provided by educators, the currently used teaching methodologies in the country which are influenced by western methodologies, can not be described as suitable for low level students in our local contexts. Though there can be similarities with regard to the learning condition and atmosphere, there can also be dissimilarities undeniably. As a result of the lack of formal studies carried out with regard to teaching methodologies within local contexts, both educators and learners have to depend on foreign theories, which are adapted to the local arena and are forced on school teachers by higher education authorities.

Though several vital investigations with regard to second language teaching and learning have been carried out by scholars such as Professor Shiromi Fernanado at the University of Colombo, such deep researches or analysis can not be seen to be carried out recently. Consequently, what is pointed out by a minority of teachers within this study, also seems difficult to be ignored.

Within this modern social context, technology gains a prominent place and it affects various aspects of an individual's life. Consequently, in the educational sphere also, the use of technology has become a new trend. However, as pointed out by teachers, in most schools, use of technology for teaching is minimal, mainly due to the lack of facilities and sometimes due to the lack of competent staff to use technology. As a result, the opportunity to resort to a strategy that would increase the attention and interest level of students is lost.

The work of school teachers is constantly monitored by high ranked educational officers and records are kept on that while educational workshops are carried out in order to make them aware of teaching methods and other relevant details. Some teachers who show dissatisfaction over the currently used methods, perceive such attempts as forcing certain methods on to them to be used within the classroom, without granting freedom for the teacher to choose a suitable method according to the level of the student. For example, when the student centered teaching methodology is used, most of the time talented students dominate and weak students copy their work and no language improvement really takes place. In accordance with the view of some other teachers, sufficient information is not provided in instructional manuals, bringing out certain issues and difficulties for teachers sometimes.

Another important reason for the dissatisfaction felt by teachers is that, with the currently used methods, students are never made to feel that they are practicing how to use a language, but as merely learning a subject. For instance, the fact that language is for communication is forgotten and exam purposes are highlighted, so the student is not impressed by the methodology used which stresses him. This is also a valid point as no one can forget the fact that English is a language and that today it is basically used as a tool of communication, so it cannot be taught as any other theoretical subject. However, often grammar or theory based explanations are given focus within L2 classrooms while the practical and communicative usage of the target language is not completely realized as an aim of the teaching-learning experience. Surprisingly lecturers also share similar views with regard to these matters.

Thus in considering the reasons forwarded by teachers and lecturers who project a lack of satisfaction with regard to the currently used teaching methodologies as depicted above, a similarity of ideas can be identified from both parties. For instance, while 03 teachers state that the currently used teaching strategies are not very suitable or hundred percent practical to be used within the local setting, 04 lecturers similarly state that there is an urgent need to resort to innovative ways of teaching English as a second language.

Use of The Eclectic Method - Perception of the educators

In answering question number 11, with regard to the use of the ECLC, 18 school teachers and 20 lecturers project their preference to use ECLC within a L2 classroom instead of using a single methodology, suggesting the importance and effectiveness of this strategy which is understood by these educators who have been in the field of teaching considerably for a long period of time. However, when the answers are deeply analyzed, it can be discerned that only 10 school teachers actually use ECLC practically within the classroom and the rest of the school teachers find it difficult to use this methodology.

When the school curriculum is considered, related to any subject, it seems to be vast and broad and it is same with English. For example, there is a text book provided for each class which is full of grammar and extra activities and it is often difficult to complete this book within the given period of time. So, as some teachers have pointed out, in teaching a lot, within a given short period of time, different methods have to be adopted successfully to maintain the interest of the student for the lesson or in other words, the use of ECLC becomes important.

Similarly some other teachers have voiced this issue, stating that "some lessons are difficult to be taught using one method". On the other hand an overall understanding of a lesson can be given to students, when several strategies are used to impart knowledge with regard to one lesson. In such a situation ECLC would bring out all the positive aspects of the selected teaching methods.

Simultaneously, it is vital to note that ECLC caters to the different needs and learning styles of students, so the use of it would benefit students who belong to a wide range of background and ability. For example, a teacher may start teaching a particular lesson, resorting to the lecture or grammar translation method and then switch into a pair or group activity or do a game in the class, to assure students practice the learnt grammar component successfully. Within such a situation, visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners are benefited at different time periods and the objectives of the lesson can be realized, without only sticking to one methodology and benefiting only some students, while the likenesses and learning styles of the rest of the class are ignored. ven though, one method that is used here is not very successful, the other related methods would benefit the students. However, if only one methodology is used, and if it is failure, the whole language teaching and learning process becomes a failure.

Majority of the lecturers also seems to have forwarded a similar stance with regard to the use of ECLC within the university system. According to them, the use of ECLC, creates an enjoyable learning atmosphere, without boredom and the interest and motivation level of the student rises as a result.

When there is variety, it is not only the students who benefit from them, but also teachers can target the realization of several language objectives at one time such as teaching a particular grammar theory, writing sentences using that grammar component and using that sentence structure in a simple speaking activity. Thereby several language skills can be covered effectively and interestingly. Thus variety also enhances practicality within the L2 classroom. Further more, the idea of having variety in the L2 classroom goes hand in hand with the normal usage of the language within the human society. That means, language in reality functions in various ways and it is an artificial attempt, if a teacher tries to stick to one strict methodology in teaching such a language which is used for communication in numerous contexts and in numerous ways.

Methodologies used in the L2 classroom – Perception of the learners

In obtaining information with regard to the perception of learners about the teaching methods that are used in their classrooms, they were asked whether the syllabus and the teacher's way of teaching persuade them to learn English. According to the data obtained through this question, 134 students and 148 undergraduates directly answer affirmatively, answering "yes" where as 87 students and 96 undergraduates state the syllabus and the teacher's way of teaching impress them only to a certain extent while 06 learners have refused to accept this fact and 29 learners state they do not find any specialty in the syllabus or in the way of teaching.

Though the students respond like this, the educator or the method adopted can not be criticized wholly as several weaknesses can be identified from the learners also. For example, the low esteem given by students to the free education they receive in schools and universities, the non-serious attitude they show towards English, specially within the university, low attendance to classes that ultimately negatively affect the result and language improvement of the learners and the high esteem shown towards various private English courses for which learners have to pay a high amount of money are some such factors.

Commonly used teaching methodologies – Perception of the learners

According to the following chart, while school teachers state that they commonly use SA, CLT and COL, students perceive a high usage of GTM (150), LM(150), DR (102) and SA (102). When lecturers mention that they commonly use CLT, COL, DR, TECH, undergraduates emphasize that CLT (175), COL (165) and TIM (175) are used often by their lecturers. Some of the students and undergraduates have also identified the use of ECLC within the classroom (80 students and 145 undergraduates).   **Figure ii**

Commonly used teaching methodologies within the class as perceived by learners
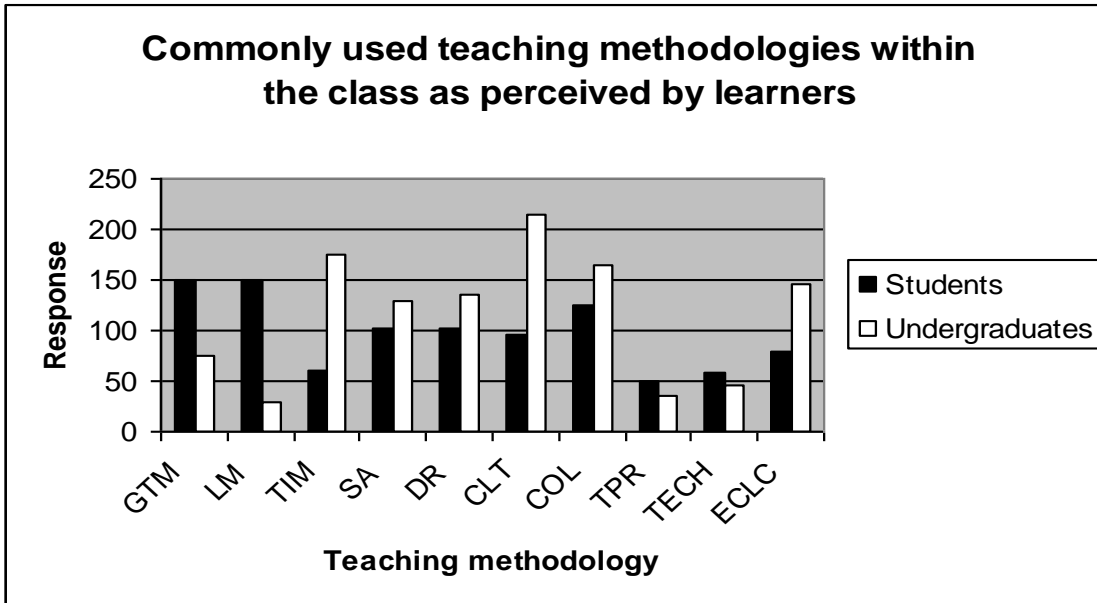
Students depict their preference to learn through ECLC (200), TECH (145) and SA (78) and undergraduates indicate their preference to learn through ECLC (285), COL (148) and CLT (133). In analyzing these responses three main factors can be identified. The first one is the preference shown by both school children and undergraduates to learn through ECLC and the second fact is that even when it is used in the classroom, both parties seem not to identify it distinctly and this highlights another vital factor. That is more distinct variations in teaching and variety of strategies have to be clearly and effectively used than it is done at the moment, to make the students feel a drastic change that impresses them to learn. Two instances that prove this idea are given below.

According to informant number 54 her school English teacher only uses LM and TIM, but she would like to study through GTM, ECLC and TECH. Consequently, she attends a tuition class in which she identifies her tuition master to use various methods such as GTM, LM, SA, DR, CCL and ECLC. However, the majority of teachers shows awareness of ECLC and also mentions that they use it. Anyway what the students say cannot be ignored as they can also be good judges of teachers being the ones who experience the teaching. A teacher can say he uses a particular method, and knowingly or unknowingly may not use that exact methodology. As a result, it is mandatory to effectively

reintroduce distinct variations in teaching and variety of strategies to bring out a drastic change in the teaching -learning experience and to persuade the learner to learn with interest.

According to informant number 56, her English teacher uses a variety of methods and she identifies it as ECLC and does not see a need to attend a tuition class. These kinds of responses question the attitudes of students with regard to the teaching freely provided in schools and universities. Once the attitude of the learner is positive with regard to the teaching–learning process, he can reap a lot of benefits. Simultaneously the differences among good and well qualified teachers and low qualified teachers who do not contribute for an effective teaching-learning process can be recognized as possible issues to be addressed in analyzing the teaching methods used in such contexts.

Use of ECLC - Perception of the learners.

According to the data collected under question number 15 that asked whether ECLC is better than the use of a single methodology, 234 students and 247 undergraduates have exclaimed ECLC to be a better option than resorting to one methodology while only 16 students and 03 undergraduates refuse to accept it due to the complications that this option would bring out for a lesson with the inclusion of too many varied activities that would affect the concentration level and clarity in understanding the lesson.
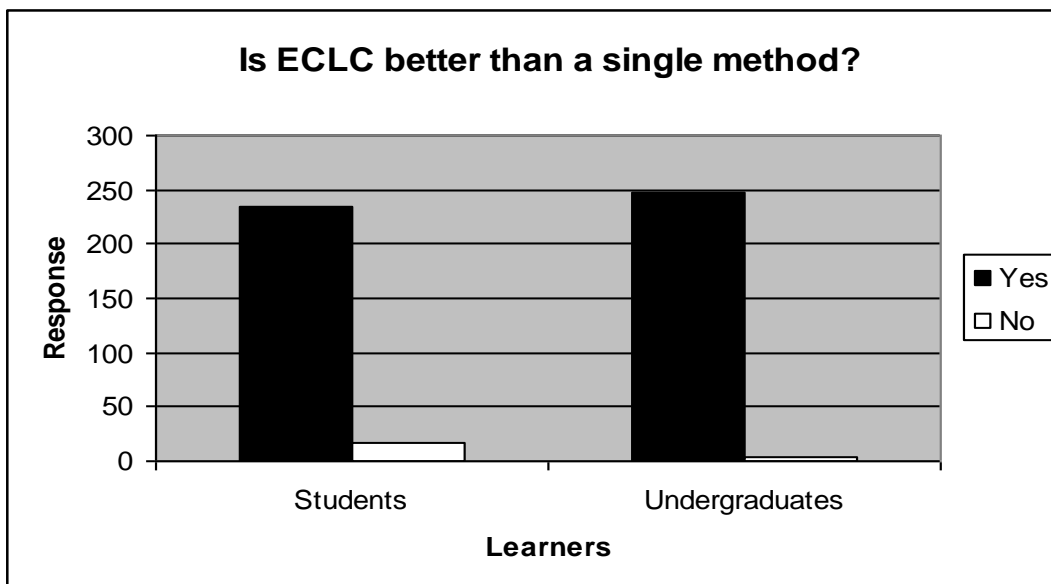

Figure 4 -iii

Students and undergraduates, who provide reasons for the answers they have given for the above mentioned question highlight that, when ECLC is used, there is no boredom or monotony in the class and an interest to learn emerges. Further more, when a wide variety of method is used, it raises the

memory level of learners as it is a well-structured, active teaching-learning experience through which learners learn a language component in varied ways, developing reading, writing, listening and speaking within one session.

Both students and undergraduates seem to have almost a similar knowledge and understanding with regard to the importance of ECLC. They might not have thought about teaching methods and their effectiveness earlier, but when they are given relevant guidelines and explanations and are questioned about these factors, they have shown a surprising level of reviewing, criticizing, understanding and selecting what is the best and worst teaching method.

Thus several vital aspects with regard to the use of an appropriate teaching methodology within the L2 classroom, paying special attention to the significance of preparation for a lesson, armed with a suitable strategy to impart knowledge, commonly used stratagem in the current scenario, satisfaction of educators with regard to the currently used methods, reasons for that and the use of ECLC are reviewed in order to reach valid conclusions and generalizations.

CONCLUSION

In identifying a suitable methodology to be commonly adopted within the local L2 classroom context, prior preparation for a lesson and the selection of an effective teaching methodology are singled out to be prerequisites for a successful teaching-learning process. In addition to the identification of these two prominent factors in teaching, a few other factors such as the class, context, time period, number of students, type of lesson, the relatedness of lesson objectives and the strategy used to impart the knowledge targeted by the lesson are also recognized as other valuable points to be considered deeply. Nevertheless, the issues that can be discerned with regard to the practical consideration shown over the above mentioned two prerequisites can be projected as one reason for the lack of English proficiency among school and university learners.

It further becomes evident that within the local secondary and tertiary level contexts, similar techniques in teaching are adopted both by school teachers and lecturers. Thus, a high usage of CLT, COL, DR, TECH and SA can be perceived, assisting the researcher to come to the conclusion that both parties seem to use a combination of structural and communicative aspects in teaching, consciously or unconsciously, suggesting the use of ECLC within the classroom in varying degrees.

As the use of a combination of structural and communicative methods is discerned as a better option than resorting to the single use of either a structural methodology or a communicative approach, a high level of satisfaction with regard to the use of teaching methodologies on the teachers' and lecturers' part as well as from the learners' side can be perceived through the data. However, the fact that still there are certain issues and frailties with regard to the practical application of a methodology that constitutes both structural and communicative strategies cannot be ignored.

Simultaneously school teachers, lecturers and learners similarly resemble a great credence over the use of ECLC, both as an effective method of teaching and learning and they are not ignorant about the advantages offered by this strategy. In evaluating the data collected from school teachers and lecturers, CLT, COL and SA can be distinguished as the best three methodologies to combine in teaching English using ECLC and similarly students and undergraduates pinpoint CLT, COL, SA and TECH as preferred methods of learning. Simultaneously all the three parties stress on the use of ECLC and this proves the fact that all of them prefer to either teach or learn using a variety of methods or in other words using ECLC.

Recommendations

It can be suggested here that the preferences and choices of learners and educators in either learning or teaching that are described earlier, can be made very effective by the inclusion of a structural methodology such as LM and giving a thorough knowledge about grammar while continuing to use the above mentioned communicative strategies. The introduction of interesting tactics in adopting LM and emphasizing the significance of gaining a theoretical background to realize the target of achieving language proficiency, will bring success to this attempt taken.

Reminiscing the researches carried out by Freeman, Mellow, Cruz and Li who emphasize the use of a coherent combination of structural and communicative methods or in other words the use of formal instruction and communicative activities, it is vital to note that ECLC should not be restricted to a combination of only three or four methods when numerous methodologies which can be artistically combined in a classroom are available. Consequently, the above suggested ECLC combination through the data collected from the current research, can be further improved by the following suggestions. That is a teacher can adopt a number of ECLC combinations to be used on different days of teaching within a week. For instance, on one day the teacher can select the combination of CLT, COL, SA, LM and TECH while on another day he can choose to have DM, ALM, TPR and S which seem not to be often used within the local L2 context.

The Relationship between the Adopted Teaching Method and the Learner's Language Improvement

This research has attempted to find out whether ECLC is a good method in imparting second language knowledge within the local secondary and tertiary level contexts. As hypothesized, finally it is proved that, actually ECLC is a better option to resort to, in teaching, than using a single methodology in teaching English. However, weaknesses in the practical application of this method can be discerned. Thus, the low English proficiency level that can be commonly seen among school children and undergraduates, amidst the great attempts taken by educators to improve knowledge, can be perceived.

While attention was focused on these specifically focused areas in the research, another important factor was observed by the researcher. That is, the adopted teaching method is not the only factor that depicts a close relationship with the learner's language improvement. When learning and teaching, specially within the university, are examined, it is found out that, often the ratio of student participation for English classes is very low, except in cases where the English course is mandatory. For instance, during the period of time that students have continuous assignments for main subjects, they totally forget their English class and sometimes the teacher who steps into the class, well prepared and with enthusiasm, only finds few students and the lecturer is also disheartened.

Nevertheless, when a questionnaire is given to them, asking their thoughts on the teaching method used in the class room and about the syllabus or the teacher's way of teaching, they would see all the frailties with regard to the lecturers and the system, while being totally blind to their own weaknesses. As a result, the researcher firmly believes that, not only researches on ECLC and other teaching methods within the local context, but also researches should be carried out targeting the need, attitudes and preferences of learners with regard to learning English.

The above mentioned are significant issues within today's academic sector which need to be addressed urgently. The government and educational officers are taking great attempts to improve the English knowledge of youngsters to make them well equipped with necessary qualifications required by the job market, and annually various projects are carried out with the monetary assistance given by international organizations such as the World Bank to enrich the future of local students. However, the above mentioned challenges are not recognized or addressed, so whose fault is it? Anyway, in the end, the young learner today, will face a difficult situation tomorrow, when he has to compete with a graduate passed out from a local or foreign, private university, armed by the power of the sword ("Kaduwa"); English.

Limitations of the Current Research and Further Insight to Future Research

Since the scope of this current investigation is limited in several ways, ECLC is only identified as a vital methodology to adopt by a teacher that would interest and benefit a learner in a variety of ways. However, no survey is carried out to specifically measure the different levels of proficiency achieved when a single methodology and a variety of methods are used within the L2 setting with regard to the target population. Nevertheless, the current research has undeniably attempted to fill a gap in the local research arena with regard to the awareness of teaching strategies and this examination has again highlighted the validity of ECLC, while also providing an insight for more future research on the above mentioned areas.

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