

AN ECLECTIC APPROACH TO TEACH WH QUESTIONS FOR FIRST YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In today's English Language Teaching and learning scenario, students find it difficult to acquire the language skills in conventional teaching methods followed in the language classes. The students in today's classroom are with lot of psychological distractions by the gadgets they use, specially their mobile phones and the social network connections. Therefore, the challenges for the language teachers are high. So, this paper focuses on, how an eclectic approach is effectively used to teach 'Wh' questions to the students at the undergraduate level. It also suggests feasible solutions to the language teachers to face the obstacles of the English Language Learners.

Keywords: Eclectic, methodology, Inductive, activity based, Translation method

Introduction

English stands as the dominant language and wide spread language throughout the world. It stands superior among other languages in the world. Dylan Lyons in his article "How many People Speak English, and where is it Spoken?" mentions that "About 360 million speak English as their first language". Thus, English flourishes daily in almost all fields, among different non-native speakers of the world. N. Prema in her book *Teaching of English* describes, "In every sphere of life like social, political academic, cultural and economic life English has significant value" (15).

Brief History of English Language Teaching in India

The History of English Language Teaching began during the time of colonization of British invaders in India. The British invaders found it very difficult to interact and communicate with the people of India. So, they thought of teaching a common language to them and started teaching English in India. But there arose many problems for the teachers to teach English for the learners in India. Also, the lack of English teachers paved a way for starting English language trainer schools in India. Two institutions were built in India to train the students, one at Bangalore and the other at Chandigarh. Also, Central Institute of English and Foreign languages (CIEFL), now known as English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) was started to teach English

effectively to the students of India. Jean Piaget proposed a structural syllabus to the British Government which was later on accepted by them. In the Minutes of Education (1835), Lord Macaulay mentioned the usage of English in India and also suggested English to be taught to the students of India. British rulers, thus, focused on teaching their inventions and discoveries to the learners of India. Even after the Independence, English flourished in the states of India. English was glorified by our then Prime Minister Jawaharlal English, as it is not our native language but stood unique and was announced as the Constitutional language of India. Thus, the history of English Language Teaching (ELT) continues till now with the emergence of lots of approaches, methods and techniques to teach for the teachers and learners in India.

Contemporary English Language Teaching (Current Scenario)

In current scenario, English Language Teaching in India, has widely spread and has its own impact in the teaching and learning of English among teachers and learners respectively. Almost every teaching institution focuses the teaching and practise of English in their campus. English has been considered officially as second language and also has been taught effectively in these days in almost all institutions. But the learners, even now, have to face problems in acquiring the language in this sub-continent.

Problems of the students in acquiring the language

In the beginning of the class, students were asked to say about their problems faced by them in learning English Language skills. The responses from the students are as follows:

- 1) Using appropriate words in sentences was the difficulty faced by 11 students.
- 2) Lack of opportunity to speak in English was the problem for 8 students.
- 3) Fear of speaking was the barrier for 13 students.
- 4) Lack of vocabulary was the problem faced by 6 students.
- 5) Lack of Grammatical knowledge was the hurdle for 17 students.

The language trainer's problems in imparting language skills to the second language learners in a General English class are:

- 1) Large classroom of around 64 students.
- 2) The students were called by other staff members during class hours.
- 3) Students are from various socio-economic background which makes the students in understanding the subject. This consumes time.
- 4) Noise from neighbouring classes.

Target Students

The experiment was conducted for fifty-five students from I year B.Com 'A' class at St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli.

Procedure

The first steps in the systematic advance in this teaching experiment have been the following.

- First, a written diagnostic test was conducted in English language alone.
- Second, an oral diagnostic test was conducted in a Translation method.
- Thirdly, the difference needs of the students were identified.

The second step

The situations in which WH words such as ‘what time’, ‘when’, ‘where’ etc. were used, to make the students use them in their conversation with their peers. Students were able to apply as they understood.

They were asked to write their daily routine and they were also encouraged to say their daily routine in front of their peers. Examples such as ‘I wake up’, ‘I brush my teeth’, ‘I bath’, ‘I drink’, ‘I come’, ‘I eat/have/take’ were given. After, this chance was given to every student in the class, they were asked to add the time of their daily routine. At this point of exercise, they were introduced prepositions around, about, at, after and before. Now, here students were asked to say their daily routine along with the time. They were also asked to write few sentences mentioning the time along with their daily routine. Now, the adverbs of frequency like ‘usually’, ‘normally’, ‘generally’ and ‘often’ were introduced to them and usage was explained to the students using bilingual method. Here, the students felt confidence to speak about their daily routine mentioning the time and adverb of frequency as the examples given below:

- 1) I usually wake up around 6.30 in the morning.
- 2) He normally goes to the college at 8.30 am.
- 3) They often play football about 6 O’clock in the evening.

After that, students were asked to frame questions to find out their partner’s daily routine. Lot of examples were provided and they were asked to frame questions as follows:

- 1) What time do you go to the college?
- 2) What time do you watch Television?
- 3) What time do you take bath?

After framing these questions they were asked to come in front of the class for a short conversation practise. Here it was noticed that students were able to frame questions without hesitation or fear to their peer member and they were able to answer the question answered by their peers. Following this exercise they were asked to write the conversation between two people about their daily routine.

Students were taught to use different WH words like ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘why’ and ‘how’.

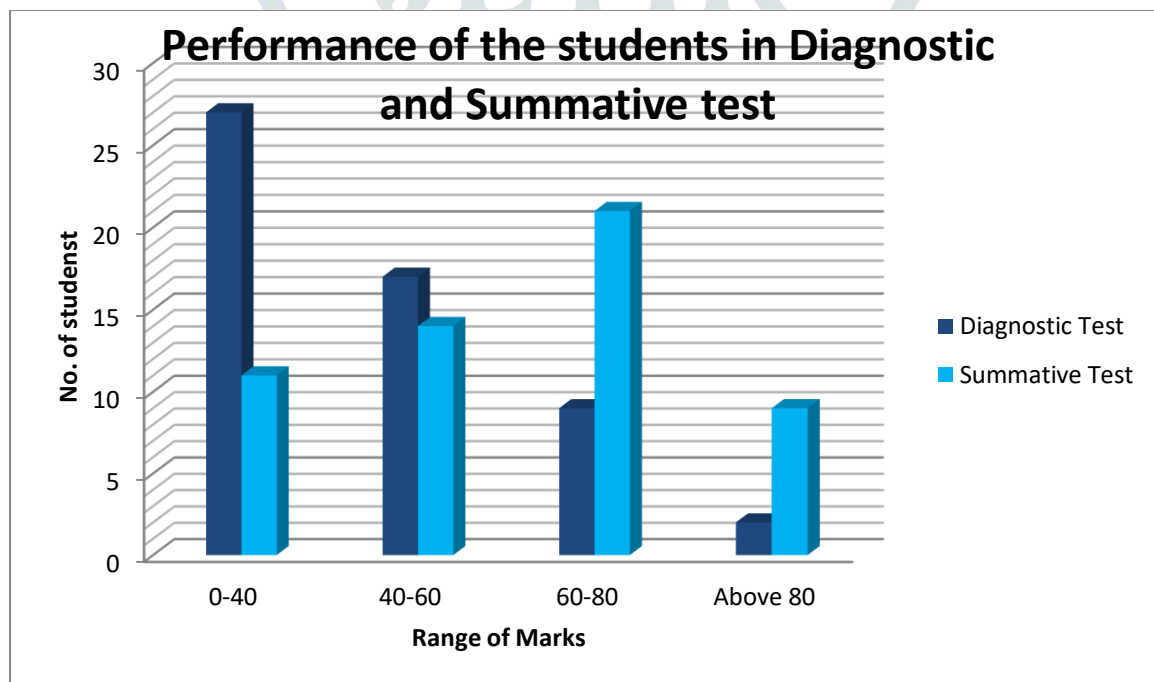
Data Analysis

Range of Marks	No. of students	Percentage (app.)
0-40	27	49
40-60	17	31
60-80	9	16
Above 80	2	4

Table 1.1: Performance of the students in Diagnostic test

Range of Marks	No. of students	Percentage (app.)
0-40	11	20
40-60	14	26
60-80	21	38
Above 80	9	16

Table 1.2: Performance of the students in Summative test



Bar chart 1.1

Conclusion

It is clearly understood that bilingual, inductive, deductive, participative, communicative, methods have been used here. And therefore Eclectic Approach has been used in enhancing the usage of 'Wh' questions among ESL learners. Thus, this paper also proves that the use of Eclectic Approach will surely enhance the understanding of 'Wh' questions through the data collected and analysed both in Diagnostic and Summative test from the first year Undergraduate B.Com students of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli.

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