Application and justification of Eclectic Approach (an innovative teaching style) for ELT practitioners in both Private and Public Universities in Bangladesh

Subtitle: Analysis of an objective in two different perspectives: the use of techniques, implications, and limitations: Implicit suggestion for English Language Teaching

Sumya Alam
Lecturer, Department of English, BSMRSTU, Gopalganj-8100, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Abstract: This paper aims to figure out the contextual application of eclecticism and compare two perspectives of learning that relate to public and private educational institutions. (Reference: both AIUB and BSMRSTU, where I had been teaching for years). This essay intends to draw the picture of real-life teaching experiences in both private and public universities. My focus will be on justifying all four skills, especially listening and speaking skills through eclecticism. It is all about a teacher's unique innovations and his/her creations to cover up all skills in one lesson.

Some new innovative techniques and activities have been applied in learning and acquiring English in my classroom. My goal is to talk about how successful a teacher can be to introduce a new technique. For example, teachers are suggested to practice based on 'realia' like playing and listening to songs and music videos as innovative texts to exercise on all for skills. Finally, this paper's general purpose is to discuss a very authentic new technique, its future implications, results, problems, and solutions. To talk about these limitations of all other single methods, some current practices will be mentioned to investigate learners' needs based on "Needs Analysis." Some solutions will be suggested at the very end of this paper.

Keywords: Class Objective, Eclectic Approach, Implications, Implied Suggestion, Innovative Technique, Lesson Plan, Needs Analysis, Problems, Solution, Text

Introduction

To keep pace with today's global world, English teaching cannot be taken aside since it is the most common lingua franca everywhere around the world. English learning has its importance to fulfill some basic purposes like in academic, commercial business, and communicative sectors; English is used as an international language and technology development. It has played a vital role in many other sectors, including technology, medicine, engineering, tourism, etc., and so on for a long day. In education, for getting a higher degree and studying abroad or making a research paper or reading many books, magazines, and newspapers written in English, it is very much needed to have minimum knowledge of English. The tertiary level students already got exposed to learning English as a second language from their schools and college settings. To teach students, teachers have been following many methods for many years, for example, The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), The Direct Method, the Structural- Situational Method, and The Audio-Lingual Method, The Bilingual Method, The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), The Total Physical Response, The Silent Way, The Eclectic Approach are most common methods of teaching and learning.

For these reasons stated above, teaching English using an appropriate tertiary level method cannot be ignored and avoided. To desire and make a successful educational goal for individual institutions and students, teaching English in their dynamic context is a challenge for university teachers. But one method is not adequate to solve all the problems in language pedagogy. It is wise to use principles, techniques, and ideas from several methods in one lesson, which can be called eclecticism.

My focus, according to the demand of the title, will be basically on eclecticism in teaching English, tertiary level (the university level after intermediate in Bangladeshi context) and private and public universities, introducing a new technique for better learning, changes in teaching practices-their beliefs, principles, and implication of future trends and constraints. The discussion will be on the eclectic method already exercised in those universities mentioned above. Another focus will be on alternative techniques and strategies followed in teaching English as a second language. As one method has its strengths and weaknesses, the paper's main target is to discuss an innovative learning style. Some practices will be suggested based on music videos and other lyrical songs (a unique text type) to directly involve the students and create their interests through interesting activities. This, I found very fruitful and flexible, and it always fulfills students' demands and interests. In the end, I will share some results that I found after discussing issues related to my study.

I. Literature Review

A. *What is an Eclectic Approach, and What does eclecticism mean?*

The eclectic approach means combining many methods deriving from many other principles, techniques, and processes. By definition, Kumar (2013) noted that "the eclectic method is a combination of different methods of teaching and learning approaches." This method was initiated in the 1990s and became popular this decade. The term "Principle Eclecticism" was advocated and used by Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Mellow (2000), who describe 'a coherent, flexible, and pluralistic approach to language learning and teaching'. As the individual method has its constraint, Brown (2002) argued that eclecticism provides the solution because it allows the teachers to select and decide what is beneficial and helpful in their particular dynamic context. Since it is context-sensitive, learning is relaxed and fun for learners. A teacher has the freedom to choose what works better in which situation, as Mwanza (2019) describes.

Furthermore, Gao (2011:1) describes the eclectic approach as not a "concrete, single method, but a method which combines listening, speaking, reading and writing and includes some practices in the classroom." He proposes that a teacher should integrate many methods to take advantage of and avoid single ones' disadvantages.

Like other approaches and methods of language education, the Eclectic Approach has some inherent principles. Perhaps, the main principle of this approach is that the language teacher can choose any suitable methods or techniques befitting the needs of the learners and learning situation. The following principles as presented by Al-Khuli M. Ali (1981:7) may be considered: ¬ Giving teachers a chance to choose different kinds of teaching techniques in each class period to reach the aims of the lesson; ¬ Flexibility in choosing any aspect or method that teachers think suitable for teaching inside the classroom; ¬ Giving a chance to pupils to see different kinds of teaching techniques that break monotony and dullness on the one hand and ensure a better understanding of the material on the other hand.

B. *'Need Analysis' and Eclecticism:*

According to Pratt (1980), need analysis is defined as "an array of procedures for identifying and validating needs and establishing priorities among them" (P.79). According to Coffing (1974), need assessment answers the question "Who needs what, as defined by Whom" (p. 17). Most authors divide the needs into two broad categories: objective needs and subjective needs. The objective needs to rest on the collection of various types of biographical information. These may include general information like current proficiency, level, age, education background, previous experience, nationality, etc. The subjective needs of learners relate to learners' perceptions of what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. Some private university students are very fluent in speaking without grammar knowledge from their presentation skills. On the contrary, public university students are not that much outward and smart in speaking. So, their learning styles, strategies, needs are different. Witkin (1984) talked about the need assessment. Nunan (1988), commenting on objective needs analysis, says that objective needs help in content specifications derived from an analysis of the target communicative situations in which learners are likely to find themselves.

After analyzing the needs of learners, a method should respond to learners' needs, not learners and teachers respond to the method. According to Wali (2009), as he summarized a proposition and stated, one of the premises of eclecticism is that teaching should serve learners, not methods. In American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB), where I taught for three years, I found that the foundation courses were designed for them to be competent in business communication, in some cases, for building up their writing skills as well. But here in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU), I found that the foundation course syllabus is mostly designed to learn grammar items. Most of the students are lacked behind because of less fluency and not proficient in their communicative skills. The focus of my learning objectives and teaching goals are different in two settings.

C. *Application of Eclectic method for Bangladeshi English language learners:*

Some of the befitting good ideas, principles, and techniques are synthesized and blended harmoniously in the eclectic method. Here a teacher should consider the abilities, background, and problems of learning. One particular method is not good enough to make students communicatively competent. But the eclectic method is a possible solution as the focus is on speaking, listening, and two other skills. We know that real-life practice in a classroom context is different from our perceptions. From other previous methods, the Direct Method was introduced in 1900 as an alternative for teaching a foreign language or a second language. It aims at establishing the direct bond between thought and expression, experience, and language. The main objective was to develop communicative competence among the students. Later, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), or the communicative approach, was introduced in the 1970s and 1980s and became very popular in English Language Teaching. The concept mainly emphasizes active learning, not passive learning. According to Michael Canale & Swain (1980), Communicative Competence is defined in terms of three components, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence. Here a teacher does not use a prescribed textbook always. A teacher focuses on the needs of learners. Nunan (1988) and Tarone & Yule (1989) focus on language learners in their learner-centered curriculum design. Hamza (2020) talked about cooperative learning as a need and its effects on learners. The eclectic method is preferable to any other method in designing a course curriculum as it is the juxtaposition of all principles.

In Bangladesh, there are many public and private universities. In both universities, teachers are trying hard to find out exact and flexible ways of teaching. As a language practitioner, it is high time not to depend on only one method, especially at the tertiary level. In the language classroom, a teacher has to provide multiple opportunities for students to learn very effectively. In such a situation, eclecticism encourages various language learning activities, each of which may have very different characteristics, objectives, and underlying assumptions. The teacher can use various strategies to make language comprehensible, monitor student comprehension, and make adjustments as necessary.

In private institutions, the number of students is less than the number of students in public universities. There are many other differences in background, setting, facilities, infrastructure, classroom facilities, etc. According to the differences, students should be treated and dealt with differently. In many types of research, we found that students are not well equipped with instruments and other learning advantages. In public universities, they take English as a non-major or foundation course. In private universities, the situation is the same.

The primary focus of English language learning is to learn all four skills and be competent enough to listen, learn, and write in different situations. Many students tend to imitate accents without knowing the forms and structures. In that case, vocabularies, pronunciation, forms are not separate entities. Students must acquire and learn; they should be aware of contextual and cultural varieties. So, not a single skill should be left behind. Kumar (2013) supports the Eclectic Approach and declares, "The purpose of advocating an eclectic method is to connect life experiences to the ideas presented in the learning of the language. The types of learning activities teachers select are often directly related to their experiences in the real world." Brumfit (1984) emphasized that eclecticism was the right approach to language teaching. He further commented on language learning, "Language learning program should provide a balance of activities such as accuracy and fluency. Accuracy focuses on form and fluency on exchanging meaning, accomplishing tasks and reaching outcomes." Thus, many teaching experts have supported the Eclectic Approach for teaching languages, particularly ELT. According to Rao's (2018) speech, "the multiple lines of Eclectic Approach embodies the principle that allows choosing judiciously and helps the teachers in their work. 'Eclecticists 'seek the balanced development of all four skills at all stages while emphasizing the early development of aural-oral skills. An eclectic teacher has to be imaginative, energetic, and willing to experiment to keep lessons varied and interesting". I propose to follow eclecticism and create new innovative ideas and techniques to learn and teach language to agree with them.

II. Methodology

In this paper, I included my literature reviews; I followed qualitative research and observation; my focus group was tertiary level second language learners; I examine and analyze the task and assignment papers. Some innovative, authentic, and exclusive techniques which have been used in my classrooms in private and public universities, I have documented their assignments and collect data through email submission of assignment. I will show and discuss problematic issues by critically evaluating some experiences I gathered from classroom practices. An Eclectic approach is followed in classrooms, and the result is found by observing and analyzing home tasks and answer sheets from their classroom performances. So, it is more or less experimental.

A. Proposal of innovative activity for Bangladeshi tertiary level students:

Instead of using written texts of the target language, we can use different contextual and cultural varieties. Here, I propose a unique example of an activity to ensure better learning. As texts can be of different kinds, a music video, a song, a lecture, a dialogue, and a written document are all different types of texts.

As a teacher, in my classroom, I make my students listen, watch, read, understand, speak, and write all together in one session. Learning English as a whole requires these activities. How this is possible is the principal overview of my article. Here I would like to share an objective of acquisition and learning English below:

Lesson Plan for a single class

For an English Language Class of Tertiary Learners

a) Objective: To develop learners' critical thinking ability by listening and speaking mostly and practicing reading and forms of writing.

Learners' Profile:

Several students:	40-60
Age:	21-23
Proficiency level:	Tertiary
Learners Backgrounds:	Bangla & English medium schools and colleges
Sex:	Mixed

Text Type: Songs

Logistic Support: Whiteboard, Marker, Projector, Soundbox,

Computer, Duster

Class Duration: 75 minutes

Warm-up Session: Students are asked some questions like—

1.   What type of music do you listen to more often and like most?

2.   What are the common themes of a song?—Love, Friendship, Relationship, Separation, etc.

3.   Do these types of love songs reflect reality, or do you think they are too unrealistic?

4.   What are the qualities that make a love song more appealing and life-like?**----** the life-like story, characterization

5.   What kind of character-traits makes a character more interesting and memorable?

Listening Session: Students are divided into 8 groups and asked to listen and take notes to get the three songs' main ideas. First song- "Don't Cry Joni," Second song- "Secret Love Song," Third Song-"Broken Angel."

(**9 minutes)

> For example—you will have to think about what's happening; for example, you need to find out the story, characterization, ending of the songs. After that, you will have to do some activities.

b) Group Work:

Activities	Examples	Time
Writing down some adjectives to describe the character of the main female and male protagonist of both the stories of the songs –first and third	1. Jimmy 2. John 3. Joni 4. The two lovers 5. Husbands	10 Minutes

Speaking on- (critical judgment on given characters)	1. What do you think about their relationships? 2. What character do you like most? Why? What are the qualities of an ideal beloved? 3. Which male character do you think can be a perfect husband in real life? Why?	2 minutes for each group Total: 16 minutes
Roleplay from the third song	1. Husband – wife 2. Husband –best friend 3. Wife and her ex-lover	2 minutes for each group Total: 8 minutes
Critical Thinking on-	1. Ending of the stories 2. Future possibilities a. Whether they like the given ending or not b. How else might it be? c. What might happen in the future?	2 minutes for each group Total: 16 minutes

c) *Assignment***:** Students are asked to form groups and find out a Bangla song to compare and contrast the stories, characters, their relationships with those of English songs for the next class. The second song asks to do some tasks complete the exercise given at the end of the lyrics. The song is given below:

Song-2

Little Mix-Secret Love
Why can't it be like that? Cause I'm yours

[Verse 1: Jade & Jesy]
We keep behind closed doors
Every time I see you, I die a little more
Stolen moments that we steal as the curtain falls
It'll never be enough
It's obvious you're meant for me
Every piece of you, it just fits perfectly
Every second, every thought, I'm in so deep
But I'll never show it on my face

[Pre-Chorus: Jesy]
But we know this, we got a love that is hopeless

[Chorus: Perrie]
Why can't you hold me in the street?
Why can't I kiss you on the dance floor?
I wish that it could be like that
Why can't we be like that? Cause I'm yours

[Verse 2: Jason Derulo]
When you're with him, do you call his name
Like you do when you're with me? Does it feel the same?
Would you leave if I was ready to settle down?
Or would you play it safe and stay?

[Pre-Chorus: Jason Derulo]
Girl you know this, we got a love that is hopeless

[Chorus: Perrie & Jason Derulo]
Why can't you hold me in the street?
Why can't I kiss you on the dance floor?
I wish that it could be like that
Why can't we be like that? Cause I'm yours

[Bridge: Jason Derulo & Leigh-Anne & Jesy]
And nobody knows I'm in love with someone's baby
I don't wanna hide us away
Tell the world about the love we making
I'm living for that day
Both - Someday
Why can't I hold you in the street?
Why can't I kiss you on the dance floor?
I wish that we could be like that
Why can't we be like that? Cause I'm yours, I'm yours

c) Some questions to exercise in the class or maybe given as assignment:

Question-1: What is the basic grammar difference between "it's" and "its." Explain your answer with an example.

Question-2: What are some examples of short forms (like it's, can't) used in this song as lyrics? Write at least 5 meaningful sentences on your own using 5 examples.

Question-3: Write some informal words used in all the songs. Make them formal.

Informal words/phrases

Question-4: Write three Open questions and three closed questions based on the lyrics.

Some pronunciation practice: dance /dɑːns/, meant/ment/, can't /kant/, that /ðat/,

The above exercises for learners are quite simple and suitable to understand underlying grammar rules and practice them smoothly. They are assigned to do it in groups, which may help them promote adult learning, encourages learners to solve problems, connect, prioritize, and incorporate conceptual knowledge. It affects the development of attitudes and values of social and intellectual experience. Finally, it develops oral presentation skills while being asked to talk about story ending, characters, plot, etc., along with pronunciation. An exercise sheet is shared here to show how an individual student finds out examples of the same question structure and can write down properly.
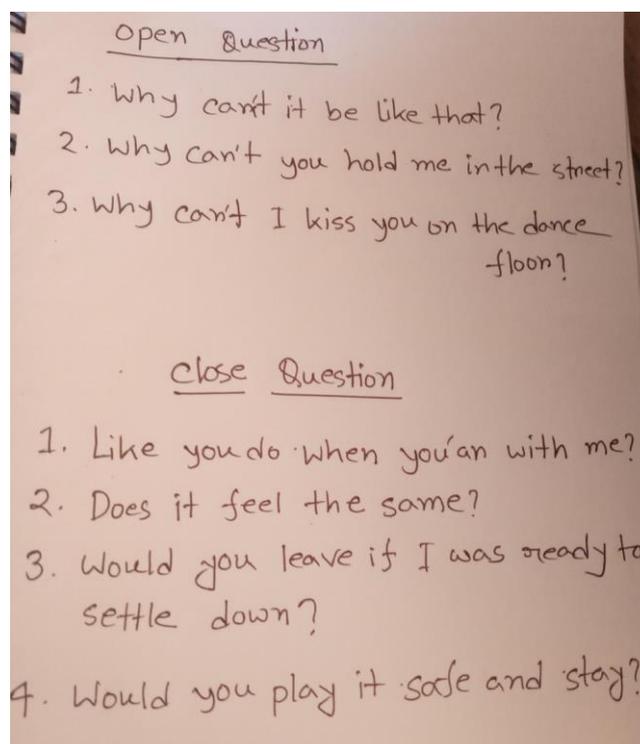
From the above exercise of a student, it is clear that he can identify other similar structures of open and closed questions from the given lyrics. Although some answers are wrong, they do not feel any burden or pressure to learn after the end of the class. The exercises are very interesting, not at all boring and dull.

III. Discussion and result

In the objective stated above, all skills are practiced. After listening to songs, some of the lyrics can be practiced further. For example, from the second song, "why can't we be like that?"; "Does it feel the same?"; "I wish we could be like that"- these three lyrics give us three forms, WH question format or open question format, closed question format, and an optative sentence structure. We can practice and ask students to write format like- in an open question, the format is -'Wh' question mark+ auxiliary verb +subject+ main verb+ object/adverb' and in an optative complex sentence, the structure is- 'Subject+ Wish+ Subject+ Verb(past form)'. These are found from the lyrics of the played song To get them connected and make them interested. Students can find several other short forms or verb contractions, formal-informal words, vocabularies, and pronunciation based on a comparison between two cultural contexts.

Here in this discussion, sharing the real-life exercise sheet and the student's task helps my analysis and makes it clear to readers. From the objectives shared above, the students listen to the song, read lyrics to understand and follow pronunciations, speak/discuss it, write about forms, characters, plot, ending, and give more examples.

From the real-life example, it is very clear that language teachers can apply and create different unique models of activities to ensure an approach to learning vocabularies, grammar, pronunciation, and spoken English. Students can get a chance to do peer work/group work, learn the language as a whole, and learn uniquely, maintaining a procedure that may seem a combination of many techniques. As music is a part of culture and context, everybody loves to listen to music. If students are involved in group activities, they can communicate and do tasks effortlessly. Once they understand the underlying Grammar forms, they will never feel pressurized by drills, translation. Rather by audio-visual effect, they can be benefitted and relaxed. In both universities, I get positive responses, and it works best for all of the students.

IV. Probable Problems and Solution

In both settings, teachers may face difficulties in accomplishing activities. I have applied the same method as the eclectic method in both cases. Students in private universities do not ask for interpretation in Bangla (first language), but most students (almost 60%) of public universities ask for clarification in their first language or Bangla. They have poor listening skills. I am astonished to find that students even don't know the meaning of easy vocabulary. They cannot find out the difference between "its" and "it's"; they do not know question format; many of them start writing using small letters; they do not have knowledge about formal academic writings; their reading skill is not satisfactory; they do not understand enriched or technical words. Public university students' problems are: they are fluent without enough grammatical knowledge; they use lots of fragments subconsciously both in writing and speaking. These are the problems related to students' proficiency. A teacher may face many more problems: a teacher needs to deal with many students in one classroom, so feedback on their tasks and assignments cannot be given within a given time. Most rooms do not have a projector and sound system; most of them are not well-equipped. Language labs are not furnished well to conduct a music class because of the shortage of instruments. As their listening skill is poor, a teacher may get into trouble to understand the lecture and fail to discover the objective of their learning. While managing everything, a private university teacher does not have to worry because the students are less in number than a public university classroom. So, ultimately the needs assessment of each perspective is different. A teacher needs to conduct a class to get support and care, which becomes very tiresome for the teacher. The same class objective, teaching style may not work for these two institutions, although they are all tertiary level learners. Students may get exposed to several other problems.

The only solution to this problem is to initiate a new innovative idea to explore. In this respect, a single method cannot give you a reliable solution. For example, GTM does not focus on speaking; there is always absence of modern communicative English that is needed for various situations. In eclecticism, the teaching of English involves students in many situations. By creating situations, the target language can be made more understandable. This method provides an opportunity for roleplaying and real-world game activities. It facilitates the achievement of objectives. It ensures constant reflection, feedback, and judgment of the teacher. The eclectic approach can be regarded as a combination of the Direct, Situational and Communicative Approach. According to Weidman (2001:2), "The Eclectic Approach has been widely accepted in English classrooms that many good teachers today use it proudly as a tag to describe to their teaching, wearing it almost like a badge of honor." Overall, eclecticism is one of the best successful approaches.

Conclusion

From the core analysis of a particular method's disadvantages and shortcomings, it is evident that the eclectic approach is mostly favored and appreciated. It serves the purpose of learning and enables them to learn spontaneously. Teachers need to keep in mind that one single method is rigid and monotonous. The above suggested practical objective gives us a clear instruction of how a teacher integrates all resources and activities. The variety of oral and written exercises helps students improve communicative abilities with fluency and accuracy. Despite having problems, every learner finds it easy to learn in a novel, innovative, interesting environment created by a teacher.

Lecturer
Department of English, BSMRSTU,
Gopalganj-8100

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