

# **Transforming English Language Teaching: introducing Flipped Learning to the English language classroom**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

English has become the most popular language that is used for different communication purposes worldwide. English is being used as a first language, second or foreign language as well as a link language by many countries in the world. There are different methods and techniques of teaching a language. The most popular methods of teaching English in Sri Lanka is the direct method. We believe that flipped learning is one of the pedagogical approaches that can be adopted to teach English. In flipped learning class time is dedicated to student centred activities including problem based learning and inquiry oriented strategy (McLaughie et al, 2014). Furthermore, students get their first exposure to learning prior to the class (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998). This approach is successfully used for teaching different subjects worldwide. It is found that flipped learning enables students to educate each other effectively (Berrett, 2012).

## **PURPOSE**

English is taught from the kindergarten to the tertiary level in Sri Lanka and is considered as a Second Language due to its use in the country since the times of the British regime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the majority of the students are not capable of using English language competently even at the completion of their tertiary education. Issues related to the use of grammar and speaking are evident. These problems may occur due to various reasons. Initial observations and discussions with the students revealed some issues related to the methods which are being practiced in classrooms; direct teaching was found to boring and many students were merely passive listeners, group learning was found to be comparatively interesting but

some inactive and less able students in some groups were neglected, not adequately participating or engaging in irrelevant work. Hence. This study was conducted to find out whether flipped learning can be successfully used to overcome major challenges prevailing in the teaching of English in Sri Lanka.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted using a sample of 61 student selected using purposive sampling. The subjects of the study were 11 years old boys and girls who were in a crucial stage in their Second Language Learning. At this is the age Sri Lankan students are divided into bilingual classes in schools where bilingual teaching is facilitated. The action research was designed to start with a pre-test and to end with a post-test followed by an intervention. Qualitative and quantitative analysis were conducted on the results of the pre-test and the post-test.

## **RESULTS**

The pre-test revealed that the students were reluctant to use grammar and listening and speaking skills; the preferences obtained for learning grammar, listening and speaking were respectively 13.3%, 11.9% and 15.6%. The subjects under study also did not show a positive response towards group learning. Only 27.9% preferred group learning. Consequently an intervention was done adopting the pedagogical approach, flipped learning together with the group learning method. The approach was adopted to enhance grammar and listening and speaking skills. Post survey showed considerable increase in preference for grammar, listening and speaking skills; 25%, 35% and 40% respectively. Further, the interview results of a sample of randomly selected students too were analyzed.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study showed that flipped learning can be successfully used to promote areas of language that students are reluctant to learn. According to the study these areas were grammar, listening and speaking skills. Qualitative results showed how much students started enjoying learning English with the new pedagogical approach introduced. It is envisaged that the results of this study will encourage English language teachers to use a combination of pedagogical approaches to promote the areas of language that the students feel reluctant to learn.

## **REFERENCES**

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## **KEYWORDS**

Flipped learning, English Language Teaching, English as a Second Language

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