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Use of Learning Related Episodes (LRE): Developing innovative methods of teaching English in the Sri Lankan classroom situation

The present study intends to explore the effectiveness of Learning Related Episodes (LRE) in teaching English in a Sri Lankan classroom. The study focuses on the performance of 15-20 students, currently following the Higher National Diploma in English (HNDE) at the Advanced Technological Institute in Jaffna.

The students are all in the age range from 19 to 25, and come from mixed economic backgrounds and their first language is Tamil. They are given a specific number of tasks and their interaction is observed to identify LREs in which the students interact and overcome language learning barriers with the teacher playing a supportive, less intrusive role. The primary concern of the study is to emphasize the development of innovative language teaching strategies such as the use of LREs which are important in learner-centered education in contrast to the approaches and practices of traditional teacher-centered learning.

However, the use of mother tongue in students' interaction is also considered in order to examine the role of first language in second language learning and how in multilingual contexts the students utilize their existing competence in one language to learn another, in contrast to the cherished view among certain educationists that the mother tongue "interferes" with the learning of a second language.

In this manner, the study attempts a critical approach towards some of the teaching / learning approaches practiced by the teachers of English in the country, emphasizing the necessity for developing innovative methods of teaching English in the Sri Lankan classroom situation.