

استقصاء الصعوبات التي يواجهها مدرسو اللغة الانكليزية لغة أجنبية في تبني طريقة واحدة

فقط في التدريس

م.م. إقبال خضير هاشم

المديرية العامة لتربية بابل

**Investigating the Difficulties Encountered by Iraqi EFL Teachers in
Sticking on Only One Method In Teaching English Language**

L. Eqbal Khudhyere Hashim

The General Directorate for Education of Babylon

eqbalalkhalaf69@gmail.com

07716003510

Abstract

It is worth mentioning that teaching is a noble work that helps students from primary to higher levels gain and learn various things to develop mentally and reinforce their personality. Since teachers are described as good actors, they try many different methods, approaches and strategies to ensure that all their students could understand the material, such as: Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Approach. The teachers try to fit the method to their students not vice versa.

In spite of employing various methods and techniques to make teaching more flexible and attractive, still there is a gap between teachers and students, there is a need to discover new method for language teaching. The approach of eclecticism is a sufficient remedy and it could integrate different methods and strategies in teaching English language. Besides, eclecticism tries to meet the lesson objectives and the students' needs. The present study reflects difficulties that teachers encounter in sticking to only one method in teaching English language as a foreign language and the necessity and importance of using the eclectic approach as the best remedy as well as it is defined as a sufficient combination of various approaches and methodologies that could suit different levels and abilities of the learners and teaching circumstances.

This paper comprises four sections: The first section includes the problem, aims , hypotheses , procedures and the value of this study. The second section contains a comprehensive description of the approaches and methodologies that are commonly used. The third section is about data collection and the fourth section presents conclusions and recommendations.

Key words: sticking, eclecticism, methods, principles, techniques

المخلص

الجدير بالذكر أن التدريس عمل نبيل يساعد الطلاب من المستويات الابتدائية إلى المستويات العليا على اكتساب وتعلم أشياء كثيرة لينموا عقليًا وجسديًا ومعنويًا. يقوم المعلمون بتجربة العديد من الطرق والأساليب والاستراتيجيات المختلفة لتمكين جميع طلابهم من فهم المادة ، على سبيل المثال: طريقة الترجمة النحوية ، والطريقة المباشرة ، والطريقة الصوتية واللغوية ، والطريقة التواصلية. يحاول المعلمون تكييف و تناسب الطريقة مع مستويات طلابهم و قدراتهم المختلفة وليس العكس. وعلى الرغم من استخدام أساليب وتقنيات مختلفة لجعل التدريس أكثر مرونة وجاذبية ، لا تزال هناك فجوة بين المعلمين والطلاب ، وهناك طلب لاكتشاف أسلوب جديد لتدريس اللغة الانكليزية. الأسلوب الانتقائي في التدريس هو حل مثالي وهو الطريقة التي يمكن أن تدمج الأساليب

والمنهجيات المختلفة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. يحاول هذا الأسلوب في التدريس تلبية أهداف الدرس وقدرات المتعلمين واحتياجاتهم. يعكس هذا البحث الصعوبات التي يواجهها المعلمون في التمسك بطريقة واحدة فقط في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وضرورة وأهمية استخدام الأسلوب الانتقائي كأفضل علاج ، كما يتم تعريفه على أنه مجموعة كافية من الأساليب المختلفة والمنهجيات التي يمكن أن تتناسب مع مستويات وقدرات المتعلمين المختلفة وظروف التدريس المتباينة.

يتكون هذا البحث من أربعة أجزاء: الجزء الأول يتكون من المشكلة والأهداف والفرضيات والإجراءات وقيمة هذه الدراسة. يحتوي الجزء الثاني على وصف شامل للطرق والمنهجيات المستخدمة في التدريس. الجزء الثالث يدور حول جمع البيانات والجزء الرابع يقدم الاستنتاجات والتوصيات. الكلمات المفتاحية: الالتصاق, الانتقائية, الطرق, الاسس, التقنيات.

Section One

I. 1 . The problem of the study

It is necessary for the teacher of English to have many essential and important characteristics. Thus, learning language differs qualitatively from other kinds of learning. Grammar –translation, reading, audio –lingual and communicative are familiar approaches that have their special properties dealing with the learning of language. These approaches are different in their sufficiency and effectiveness. So, some weaknesses and some strengths can be seen in their principles and strategies. Approaches may complete each other especially when it is impossible to find one approach that could fulfill and accomplish all of the language aims. There is no single and special method seems good enough to be universally accepted as best since the learners are different in their abilities and attitude. In teaching practice, teachers encounter various problems as they try to meet their students' needs. Some of these problems are attributed to the learners whereas other to teachers, school or material. A set of principles are required in language teaching procedure . Good teachers examine methods to see how far these agree with their own beliefs. (Harmer, 2014:70)

It is difficult to answer "What is the best method to teach English language?", because of the individual differences among the students.

It is worth mentioning that for many teachers of English, it is difficult to limit themselves and stick to only one method because they face many problems such as: there is no specific method that suit all of their students, the students are different in their levels, abilities and performances, so; there is no one certain method or approach that fits them. The teacher may face difficulty in applying a specific method because of lacking the important requirements of it.

1.2. The aims of the study.

This study aims at:

- 1- Investigating the mastery and proficiency of Iraqi foreign teachers in applying various approaches and methodologies instead of sticking to a single method.
- 2- Identifying the difficulties that teachers encounter when they limit themselves in using only one method and classifying them according to the Iraqi teachers' views.

1.3. Limits of the study .

This research is limited to:

1. Various syllabi that are used in Iraqi secondary schools.
2. Teachers of English in Babylon Directorate of Education .

1.4. The Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that:

1. There are great difficulties in sticking on only one approach.
2. Fitting the method to the learner is easier than fitting the learner to the method.

1.5. Procedures

The following procedures are adopted to meet the goals of this research:

1. Representing the sample of this research by gathering teachers randomly from Babylon Directorate of Education.
2. Making a suitable questionnaire that examined by some of the specialists.
3. Applying the tool.
4. Interpreting the results of this research statistically.

1.6. The research value

The value of this research can be shown as follows:

1. The present study is expected to have a pedagogical value to Iraqi teachers in that it enables them to adapt any method that suits their students levels and abilities instead of sticking to only one method and makes them ensure that all students could understand the material and perform more effectively as well as the teachers can save time and effort.
2. The theoretical value is hoped to be resulted from presenting the most principles of various approaches and methodologies.
3. Analysing the principles of best method that enables teachers to ensure that all of their students could understand the material.

Section Two**2.1. Principles of the most popular methodologies**

There are various ideas for all the different levels that are found in the popular methodology. This methodology represents the methods, procedures, strategies and approaches that affect on the process of teaching English language. (Harmer, 2014:55)

1. Grammar-Translation (G-T) Method

1. Grammar is taught deductively , students are given rules of grammar in their native language and then they are given sentences that exemplified these rules. (ibid: 56)
2. Reading and writing are emphasized..
3. Listening and speaking are not emphasized.
4. Students are able to present the target language correctly only by the teacher correction.
5. The target language learning goal is to understand the text written in the foreign language.
6. In T-G method, teachers have authority while learners are passive and imitators.
7. Grammar of the target language is important to comprehend the written target language.
8. Vocabulary is presented in isolated words.
9. The native language represents the instruction medium.
10. Translation is used maximally.
11. Language is mostly shown in the form of the sentence only.
12. Accuracy is necessary.

In T-G method, the procedure of teaching English is simply a combination of activities of teaching grammar and translation.

2. The Direct Method

It is worth mentioning that the direct method was resulted from the reform movement against the T-G restrictions.

1. The use of translation is minimal.
2. Grammar is taught inductively.
3. Oral skills, listening and speaking, are very important. Dialogues were frequently used to exemplify conversational style.

It was considered vitally important that only the target language to be used in the classroom, it is reaction against incessant translation. (ibid:56)

3. Audiolingualism

The direct method is shifted to the audio lingual method. This approach depends on using the stimulus-response-reinforcement model. Here, learning language is habit formation through positive reinforcement to form good habits in language. So, this method relied heavily on drills to form these habits, the student avoided making mistakes by substitution that was built into these drills. It is worth grading and sequencing grammar structures for the students to learn.

This method depends on the sentence level not on real-life context. The purpose was habit- formation through constant repetition of correct utterances encouraged and supported by positive reinforcement in the form of teacher praise or simple acknowledgement. (Larsen&Freeman;2011:29)

4. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT is resulted from the communicative revolution of the 1970s and 80s . One of the essential principles of the CLT was a shift away from an emphasis on the language usage and its formation , grammar and vocabulary, to an emphasis on the actual use of the language in the meaningful situations. Here, the language is a means of communication and it has functions to serve. (Harmer, 2014: 57)

It is necessary to use the meaning-focused communicative tasks in which the students are asked to involve. The target language should be authentic and used in real-life situations, simulation, role-play and group work are widely used in this approach. Communicative approach is considered as a huge opposite of more traditional methods.

5. Task-Based Learning

In this approach, the production of primary tasks is essential and fundamental to the learning process. If the students are emphasized on the completion of a task, they learn language as they are if they focus on language forms. The student's attempt to use language for meaning is considered as a basis and central for the language development. (Wills and Wills 2003:2)

6. The Lexical Approach

In the lexical approach, language does not contain traditional grammar and vocabulary but it consists of multi-word prefabricated chunks, these are the collocations, idioms, lexical, fixed and semi-fixed phrases that make the central part of the language. (Lewis 1997:3)

A lexical approach moves us away from a concentration on syntax and tense usage to the teaching of phrases that present words in combination. It is worth mentioning that this approach lack clear principles, there is no guidelines to what language to teach or how the internal construction of a chunk could be achieved. (Thornbury, 1998:12)

2.2. The New Principled Eclecticism Method

For Al Hamash (1985:22) eclecticism states that instead of sticking on only one

approach, it is possible to use the different approaches of language learning.

It is worth mentioning that any teacher should know why he or she does things in lessons. Any classroom activity should be based on the fact that teachers believe the procedure they are using will lead to a specific outcome and achieve the learning goals. With the benefit from their theoretical knowledge , observation and experience, the teachers can make the procedure meet with their thoughts about what helps people learn languages correctly.

According to this method, there are theories that deal with how people acquire languages best, that have been transformed into thoughts that teachers can benefit best from some elements that found in different approaches. (Harmer, 2014 : 70)

The procedure of the principled eclecticism method is based on the belief " fitting the method to the learner, not vice versa". The following examples make this belief clear and reasonable:

- A variety of both written and oral drills are suggested by the teacher to develop students' accuracy, fluency and communicative ability.
- When the focus of the classroom activity is accuracy, mistakes are corrected by the teacher immediately but if it is fluency such mistakes will be corrected later on.
- The teacher reinforces the natural sequence of any language acquisition (listening, speaking, reading and writing).
- Drills are very important to develop pronunciation, where the teacher speaks phrases that students repeat automatically.
- The grammatical and lexical materials are personalized by students in classroom.
- A didactic program should include not only grammar and lexis, but also linguistic functions, colloquialisms, idioms, etc.
- Exercises of guided discovery are used to show new grammar rules.
- A wide range of resources is improved to present relevant, stimulating, and productive lessons.

It is obvious that it is difficult and impossible to achieve all mentioned tasks when the teacher uses only one approach. As a result, professional EFL teachers use the Principled Eclecticism approach. According to crystal (1985:104) Brown (1994:74), teachers can use various elements including in different approaches. Moreover, teachers should take an approach that includes all of the principles that lead to achieve the learning objectives.

Swan (1990:90) stated that it may possible to keep a balance of fluency and accuracy if an eclectic method is based on structural, notional- functional and communicative approaches. For Tarone and Yule (1989:10), eclecticism involves a philosophy of local solutions to local problems. Good teachers should have knowledge of teaching methods in order to make sufficient and comprehensive combination that achieves the teaching objectives. (Richards, 2017: 229)

Section Three Data Collection

3.1. Data collection procedure

Questionnaire was distributed to (30) of the participating teachers in this study in order to obtain the empirical information that are useful for the present research. The teachers are given both open answers and "Yes", "No" questions respectively as shown in Appendixes (I) and (II).

Then, making interview with them for hearing their views and opinions. The data gained have been carefully analyzed. By this process, the researcher can present interpretation to the data.

3.3. Participants

For Hughes (1996:44) and Al-Samawi (2000:111) the sample must refer to the full scope of what is specified. Richards et al (1992:282) show that sample represents any set of items, individuals, etc. which have some familiar and essential characteristics.

The participants in this research are (30) teachers who teach in different secondary schools, (20) male and (10) female subjects, their age is ranged from (30) to (50) years. Their experience in English teaching varied from (5) to (25) years. The subjects filling out the questionnaire are chosen randomly. Based on the researchers' familiarity with most of EFL teachers, they were very successful and selective.

3.4. Instrument

For achieving the goal of this research and verifying the hypothesis as well as illustrating the teachers' personal viewpoints about the expected problems and constraints they might encounter in sticking on only one method, the rating scales questionnaire was constructed by the researcher. In this scale, subjects reflect their attitudes and opinions (agree or disagree) with what the questionnaire includes.

An open questionnaire contains: "what are the main difficulties and constraints that you encounter in teaching English by sticking on only one method?". The researcher distributed it to twenty teachers. Every subject was asked to show his/her personal ideas to the open – ended questions and to choose either "Yes" or "No" for the fixed response questions. The items of the questionnaire represent the most important difficulties in teaching by sticking on only one method for the subjects. These items (primary constraints) are classified according to their sources into four types:

3.5. Results and discussion

The most common constraints that are encountered by the EFL teachers in sticking on only one method are classified according to their sources:

3.5.1. Problems on the part of EFL teachers

Problems on the part of teachers are arranged according to their types from the commonest type (48) which adds up to (96%) to the least common one (38) which adds up to (76%), they are as follows, see (Table 1):

1. Deficiency in spoken English.
2. More translation to save time and effort.
3. Grammar is taught deductively.
4. Deficiency in sociolinguistic and strategic competence.
5. Lack of training in CLT.
6. Grammar-translation is easy to use.

Table (1) : problems raised on the part of Iraqi EFL Teachers in sticking on only one method

No. of Item	Agree "Yes"	%	Disagree "No"	%
1	28	96	2	4
2	25	90	5	10
3	24	88	6	12
4	20	80	10	20
5	20	80	10	20
6	18	76	12	24
Total	135	85	45	15

3.5.2. Problems caused by the students

Problems on the part of students are arranged according to their types from the commonest type (30) which adds up to (100%) to the least common one (27) which adds up to (94%), they are as follows , see (Table 2):

- 1- Proficiency of English is low.
- 2- Class participation is minimal.
- 3- Motivation for communication is minimal.
- 4- Most Iraqi EFL students in traditional teacher-centered classroom are unable to participate in the teaching process.

Table (2): The percentage of teachers' views on problems raised on the part of Iraqi EFL Students in teaching English.

No. of Item	Agree "Yes"	%	Disagree "No"	%
1	30	100	0	0
2	28	96	2	4
3	27	94	3	6
4	27	94	3	6
Total	112	96	8	4

3.5.3. Educational problems

Educational problems are arranged according to their types from the commonest type (30) which adds up to (100%) to the least common one (25) which adds up to (90%), they are as follows, see Table (3):

- 1- insufficiency of support.
- 2- crowded classes.
- 3- Grammar is emphasized.

Table (3): Educational problems raised in sticking to only one method

No. of Item	Agree "Yes"	%	Disagree "No"	%
1	30	100	0	0
2	28	96	2	4
3	25	90	5	10
Total	83	95	7	5

3.5.4. Created problems by merging T-G method and CLT

Created problems by merging T-G method and (CLT) are arranged according to their types from the commonest type (30) which adds up to (100%) to the least common one (25) which adds up to (90%), they are as follows, see Table (4):

- 1- inadequate account of EFL teaching in CLT and lack of efficient assessment instruments.
- 2- The teacher is authority in the classroom and T-G method is easy to use.

Table (4): Problems are resulted from using T-G and CLT

No. of Item	Agree "Yes"	%	Disagree "No"	%
1	30	100	0	0
2	25	90	5	10
Total	55	95	5	5

In order to validate the two hypotheses of this study which state that "there are difficulties in sticking on only one method" and "fitting the method to the learner is easier than fitting the learner to the method", all of the responses of the subjects, tables (1, 2, 3, and 4) were investigated by using the mean. The mean for the "Yes" responses of the subjects (42.5) is higher than that for the "No" ones (4.13). This proves that there are difficulties encountered by Iraqi EFL teachers in sticking to only one method and they try to fit method to their students by choosing activities and techniques that taken from various methods and approaches. Accordingly, the two hypotheses of this research are verified and accepted.

Section Four**Conclusions & Recommendations****4.1. Conclusions**

This research reflects how the EFL teachers chooses activities and techniques that derived from various methods and techniques since they face difficulties in sticking on only one method.

Because of frequent shift of methodology, teachers have felt that it is important to make an item combination from various approaches. Teaching process requires particular techniques that fit with certain situations as well as they enable students to learn easily. Besides, the stimulation of a new method or approach from time to time is very necessary to make teachers participate in different activities.

Nowadays, it is worth mentioning that teachers should know and understand how to benefit and use the meaningful and valuable procedures, techniques and methods. A variety of methodologies will be used by the modern teachers who select from each approach what is fit and meet with their students' abilities and making sufficient combination that serves the learning context and objectives. The main cause to use such combination is that the learners are different in their cultural backgrounds, abilities, motivations and there is no standard method that suits all of them, as well as this combination enables teachers to be sure that all of their students could understand and master the teaching material.

According to the EFL teachers' opinions, there is no method that could be considered as the best and sufficient to make them ensure that all of their student could master the material, so, teachers always try to make approaches and techniques fit their students' abilities and their needs not vice versa. So the solution is using eclectic approach because one of its important principles is to fit approaches to the learner not vice versa and it stands for serving a learner not a method.

It is worth mentioning that the given questionnaire reflects that the most of the EFL teachers merge highly between the T-G method and CLT. Since T-G method is easy to apply, it does not need important instruments that CLT needs as well as their students deficiency in productive skills especially speaking skill, as well as they use T-G method to save time and effort.

Here, the problems in sticking on only one method in teaching English reported by participants, accordingly to their causes, are classified into four types. Some of these problems are resulted by teachers deficiency, students bad performances, the educational system and merging T-G and CLT .

4.2. Recommendations

From the arrived results the following recommendations are drawn:

1. There is no method that can be considered as the best method in teaching English, so, EFL teachers should be free in choosing methods, techniques and activities that suit to their student's level and abilities .
2. Teachers should be familiar with different approaches and techniques. To keep learning activities and methods up-to date, teachers should always expose to a variety of teachers' magazines, books and websites that deals with teaching process.
3. Since English is still foreign language, Iraqi EFL encounter difficulties in teaching oral skills, listening and speaking, and students have no motivation to learn English as a means of communication.
4. To bridge the gap, teachers should train and practice various techniques and approaches.
5. Eclecticism represents an ideal atmosphere for teaching English and a conceptual approach that uses various theories, styles, or ideas to get fast learning.
6. Technical equipment is required in order to achieve the teaching process and produce the new course accurately.

Appendix (I) Questionnaire

A: Firstly, this questionnaire includes the following open questions:

1. Age.....2. Sex.....
3. How many years have you been a teacher of English?
4. Are you teaching in intermediate stage or preparatory stage?
5. Which grade(s) are you teaching?
6. Are you teaching in an urban or rural school?
7. Are you concerned about the methods you use in teaching English?
8. What methods are you using now?
9. Have you tried eclectic approach in teaching English?
10. Do you face difficulties in sticking to only one method?
11. Do you try to fit the method to your students not vice versa?

B: Secondly, the questionnaire contains the following closed statements to represent some difficulties that other EFL teachers have encountered in sticking to only one method.

Did you come across these difficulties or do you think they might be difficulties for you in adapting only one method in teaching?:

1. Low performance of teachers in speaking skill. "YES" "NO"
2. In English, the strategic and sociolinguistic competence of teachers is low.
"YES" "NO"
3. Writing communicative materials is not primary. "YES" "NO"
4. Learners have no English proficiency. "YES" "NO"
5. Lack of authentic teaching materials. "YES" "NO"
6. Grammar-based examinations. "YES" "NO"
7. Large classes. "YES" "NO"
8. The differences between EFL and ESL. "YES" "NO"

Appendix (II)

There are most important sources of perceived problems in sticking on only one method:

A. Problems on the part the teacher

1. Deficiency in spoken English (28= 96%).
2. Materials development is low for practicing the communicative techniques (25= 90%).
3. Deficiency in sociolinguistic and strategic competence (20= 80%).
4. Few chances for retraining in CLT (18=76%). The total number of responses of this source of constraints is (91= 85%).

2. Problems created by learners

- 1- Bad English performance. (30=100%)
- 2- Class participation is low. (28, 96%)
- 3- Communication is minimal because English is foreign language (27= 94%).
- 4- In the traditional teacher-centered classroom, the students are unable to participate in the teaching process (27= 94%). The total number of responses of this source of constraints is (112=96%).

3.Educational Problems

1- insufficiency of support (30= 100%).

2- crowded classes (28= 96%).

3- grammar- focused exams (25= 90%). The total number of responses of this source of constraints is (83= 95%).

4. Created problems by sticking only one method

1- inadequate account of EFL teaching in a specific approach (30= 100%).

2-lack of efficient assessment instruments (25= 90%). The total number of responses of this source of constraints is (55= 95%).

REFERENCES

- Asher, J. W. (1976). *Educational research and evaluation methods*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Brumfit. A.H. 1984. *Communicative Methodology in Language Learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hildreth, G. H. 1965. *Experience-related reading for school beginners*. Elementary English, 42,280-297.
- Harmer, J. 2014. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Printed in Slovakia by Neografia.
- Khalil, Al-Hamash. 1985. *Principles and techniques of Teaching English as Second Language*. Baghdad.
- Larsen and Freeman. 2011. *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Richards, J.C. 2017. *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swan, M. 1990. *A Critical Look at the Communicative Approach*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Tarone, E. & G. Yule. 1989. *Focus on the Language Learner*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Watson, D. J. 1989. *Defining and describing whole language*. The Elementary School Journal.
- Willis, D. 1990. *The Lexical Syllabus. A New approach to language teaching*, London: Harper Collins Publishers.
- 07721458001