

Participatory Educational Research (PER)
Special Issue 2016-IV, pp., 10-17 November, 2016
Available online at <http://www.partedres.com>
ISSN: 2148-6123

An Analysis of the Methods and Techniques Used by the Teachers in English Lesson at Primary Schools in Turkey

Ekrem SOLAK* and Gamze ERDEM

English Language Teaching Department, Amasya University, Amasya, Turkey

Abstract

This study investigated the choice of methods of teachers and reasons for this preference in English lessons at Primary Schools in Turkey. This study was qualitative in nature and comprised ten English teachers working at two primary schools in Ankara, Turkey. A survey which had two sections was administered to the participants in written form. The first section of the survey was composed of the demographic data of the participants such as the experience of the teacher and the department graduated and the second part involved the open-ended questions on the choice of language teaching methods and the reasons for this preference. The results of the study revealed that teachers mostly used question and answer technique and communicative method in the classroom. The number of the students, technological utilities, and the language level of the students directly influenced the method used by the teachers in the classroom. It was also highlighted in this study that the importance of interaction and the role of culture made language teaching different from other disciplines.

Key words: Language teaching methods; approaches and methods in language teaching; early language teaching.

Introduction

English language can be considered as the lingua franca worldwide, therefore learning and teaching of English language from the early ages have become more and more important in our daily life agenda. In Turkey, teaching English from 2nd grade on at elementary schools is a sign of being aware of the importance of English language both for instrumental and integrative purposes.

The methods used in English language teaching have been a controversial issue throughout the history. A method in language teaching is a factor which leads learners to goals in a fast and reliable way. It also helps to turn learners into more effective agents in the learning process. The plurality of the methods in language teaching comes up with the idea of choosing the appropriate method, because a method can be effective for a learner, but it doesn't create the same influence on another learner. The method used in language teaching determines the pedagogical basis of the teaching.

* ekremsolak@gmail.com

Therefore, this study aims to understand the choice of methods by English teachers in addition to the reasons for this choice in English lessons at the elementary schools in Ankara, Turkey. Via this study, it is also targeted to determine the views of English teachers towards English lesson and finally propose some suggestions on choosing methods at the elementary level.

Conceptual Framework

Richards and Rodgers (2001;19) define the method as “an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach.” On the other hand, they consider technique implementational, particular trick, strategem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective in a classroom. Methods and techniques need to be revised and updated in accordance with the innovations and knowledge change because the needs of the individuals have been moved to different dimensions. This necessity always keeps the qualities of a good method on the agenda.

The methods used in foreign language teaching have been proposed to fill a gap in the area and to complete the missing points. These revisions have made contribution to teach better and added alternative ways into this area. The common methods used in language teaching and accepted by European Council of Modern Languages can be presented as follows:

- Grammar-Translation Method
- Direct Method
- Natural Method
- Audio-Lingual Method
- Cognitive-Code Method
- Communicative Method
- Eclectic Method

In addition to above mentioned methods, the less common alternative methods are;

- Suggestopedia
- Community Language Learning
- The Silent Way
- Total Physical Response
- Audio-visual Method
- Task-Based-Method
- Content-Based Method (Memiş and Erdem, 2013).

Review of Literature

Hisar (2006) conducted an experimental study on the 4th and 5th graders of primary schools about the methods which could be used in English lessons at a state primary school in Turkey. 80 students were randomly distributed into two as experimental and control group. While control group was taught by traditional language teaching methods, experimental group

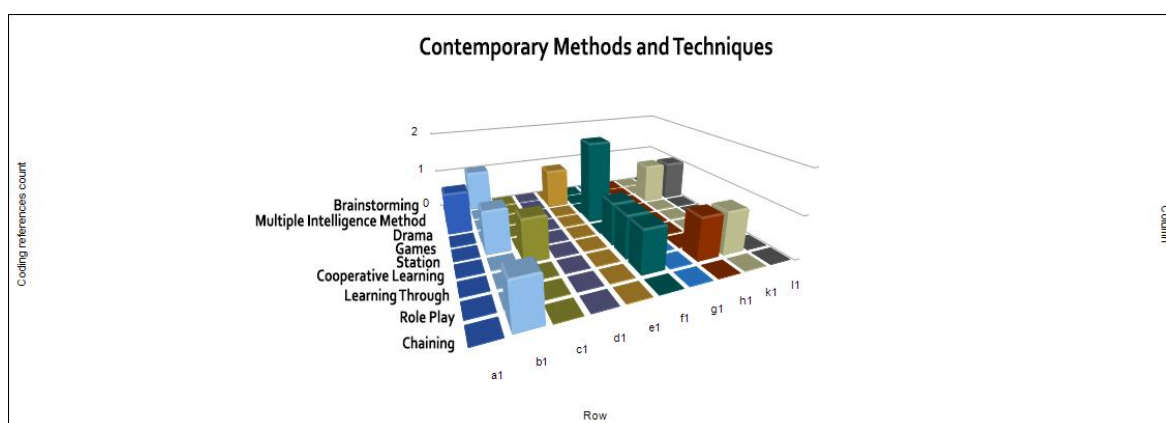
Graphic 1.the most used methods in language teaching.

According to the Graphic 1 Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Approach were mostly used by English teachers.

Question 2: What contemporary techniques do you use the most in English lessons?

Graphic 2 displays the contemporary techniques used by English teachers.

Graphic 2.the contemporary techniques used by English teachers.

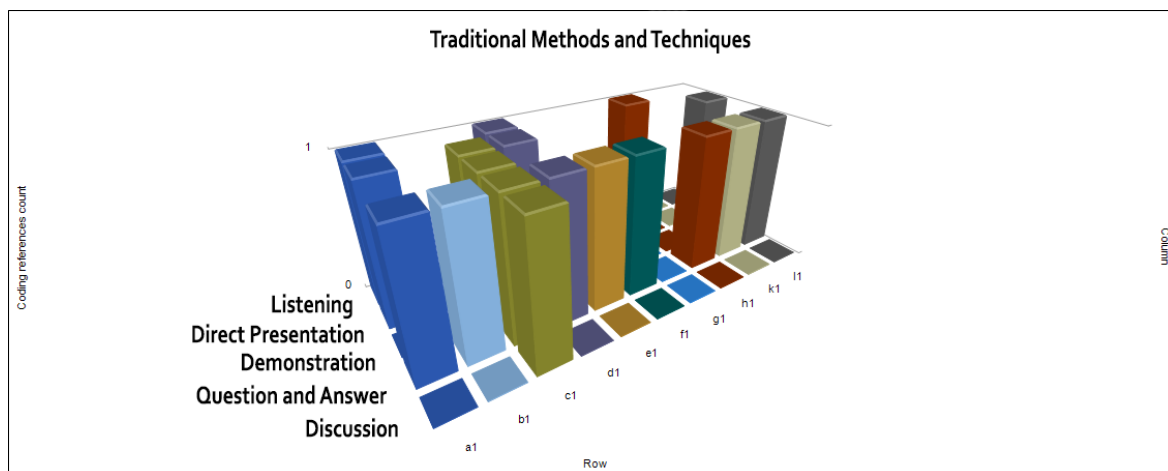


According to Graphic 2, although d1 and g1 did not state any idea about the use of contemporary techniques, other participants pointed out that they used brainstorming, multiple intelligence method, drama, game, station, cooperative learning, learning through music, role play and chaining in their teaching practices.

Question 3: What traditional techniques do you use the most in English lessons?

Graphic 3 shows the traditional techniques used by English teachers.

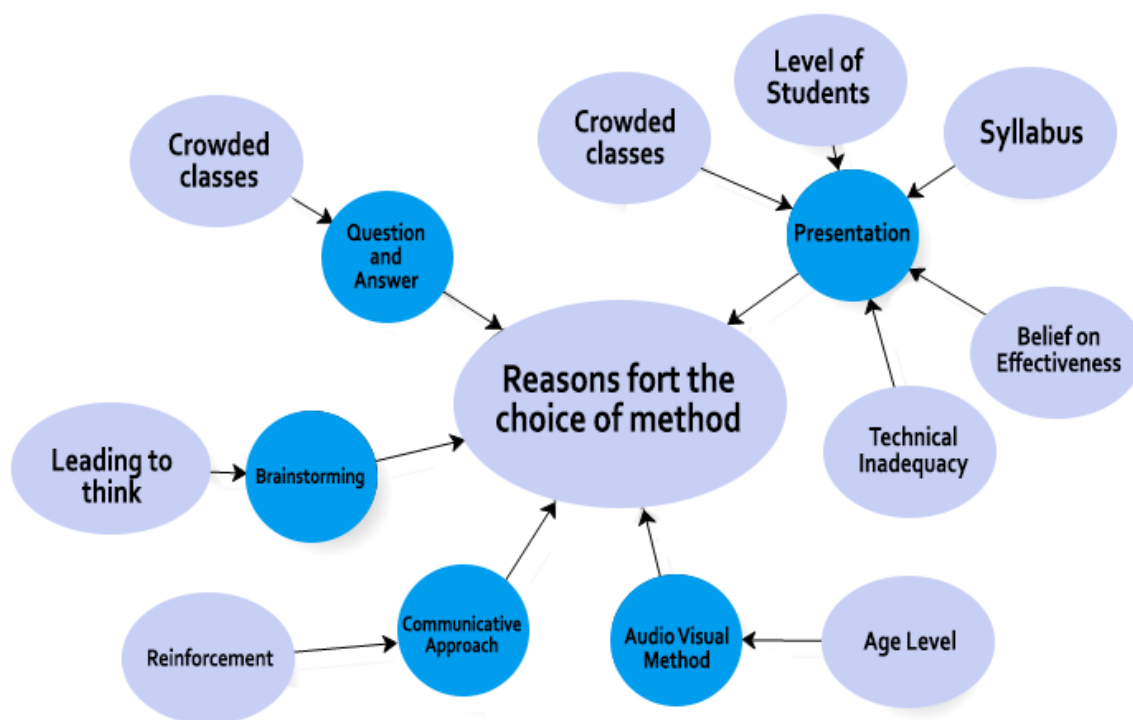
Graphic 3.the traditional techniques used by English teachers.



According to Graphic 3, participants mostly used question-answer and direct presentation as traditional techniques. In addition, other techniques like demonstration, listening and discussion were comparatively used less than other techniques.

Question 4: What are reasons for your choice of method and technique?

Model 1 indicates the reasons for participants’ choice of method and technique.

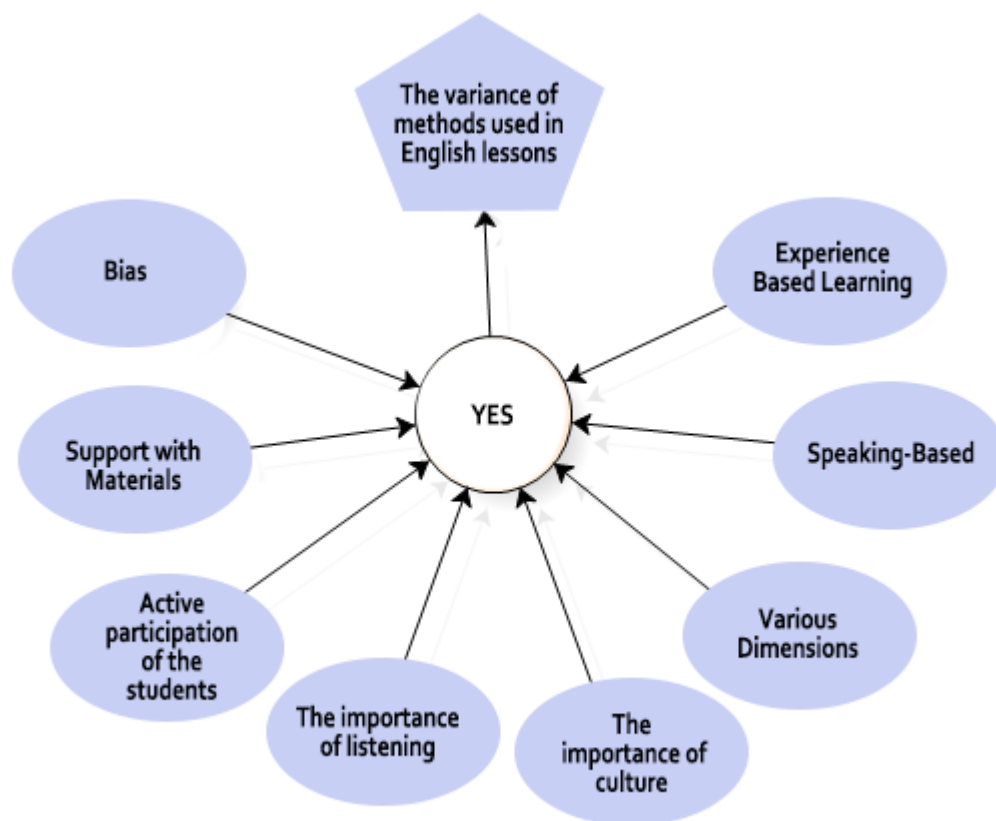


Model 1.the reasons for participants' choice of method and technique.

According to Model 1, the factors influencing the choice of methods and techniques of the participants were crowded classes, level of the students, technical inadequacy, age and belief on effectiveness.

Question 5: *Do you think that the methods and techniques used in English lessons are different from those of other lessons? Why?*

Model 2. The reasons for the variance of methods in English lessons.



According to Model 2, participants stated that methods and techniques used in English lessons were different from those of other lessons. The

reasons for this idea were bias towards learning English, active participation of the students, the importance of culture, experience-based learning, speaking-based activities and support with materials.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the methods and techniques used by English teachers at primary schools in Turkey. In addition, the reasons for this choice were highlighted. In this study, it was revealed that Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Approach were mostly used by English teachers. Participants also pointed out that they benefited from brainstorming, multiple intelligence method, drama, game, station, cooperative learning, learning through music, role play and chaining in their teaching practices.

The findings of Memiş and Erdem (2013) were consistent with the results of the present study. That study also revealed that English teachers mostly preferred presentation, brainstorming, question and answer techniques and communicative method. The reasons for this choice were crowded classroom, level of students and technological insufficiencies. Furthermore, Kaygın, Yanpar and Yelken (2009) had also similar results and found that teachers mostly used communicative method in language teaching, but they did not prefer to use direct presentation, listening, drama and discussion techniques.

In conclusion, English teachers benefitted from modern methods and techniques in language teaching and the size of the classroom, technological limitations, level of the



students and age played an important role in determining the methods and techniques used in this process. Participants also believed that teaching a foreign language was different from than those of other lessons, because it had many different dimensions including culture, interaction and bias. The following suggestions can help English teachers serving at primarily schools to use the methods and techniques effectively.

- (1) Communicative method is mostly used in language classroom. Therefore, the number of students should be limited in order to arrange group and pair work activities and role plays as the basic principles of this method.
- (2) Teachers should develop positive attitude in students' mind and overcome a bias towards learning English.
- (3) Teachers should give priority to interactive activities and students' talking time should be increased in the classroom.
- (4) Since no method is perfect, eclecticism can help teachers to boost variety and draw students' attention better.
- (5) Teachers should be aware of individual differences in the classroom.
- (6) Technological devices help to draw learners' attention. Therefore, classrooms should be equipped with modern technological tools.

References

- Arslan, R. (2012). Research on Quality and Problems of Foreign Language Instruction in Elementary Schools. *e-Journal of New World Sciences Academy* 1:1-20
- Demircan, Ö., (2013) *Yabancı Dil Öğretim Yöntemleri*. Der Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Hisar, Ş. G. (2006) "4. ve 5. Sınıf İngilizce Derslerinde Kullanılabilecek Etkili Öğretim Yöntemleri Üzerine Deneysel Bir Çalışma" Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi.
- Kaygın H., Yanpar Yelken, T. (2009). Özel İlköğretim Okullarında İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Kullandıkları Öğretim Yöntemlerinin Niteliksel Olarak Belirlenmesi. *Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*. 18(2), 318-330.
- Memiş, M., Erdem, M. (2013). Methods/Usage Features That are Used in Foreign Language Teaching And Critics. *Turkish Studies*, 8/9 p. 297-318.
- Richards, J C. & T. S. Rodgers. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*,: Cambridge University Press: Cambridge
- Tarcan, A., (2004). *Yabancı Dil Öğretim Teknikleri*. Nobel Yayıncılık, Ankara.