

INCORPORATING EXAMPLES AS AN EFFECTIVE TEACHING AID: A WINDOW TO TERTIARY EFL CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores some challenges that the teachers face to incorporate inductive method by using examples which ensures creative involvements of the students to enhance their motivation in tertiary EFL classrooms. When the teacher is going to start a class, they often feel difficulties that what should they say first definitions or examples? The study examines whether it is effective to start classes with examples rather than describing lesson topics and definitions. This study will also show how the techniques of using examples, in the beginning, act as the most effective supporting teaching aid to implement inductive method effectively.

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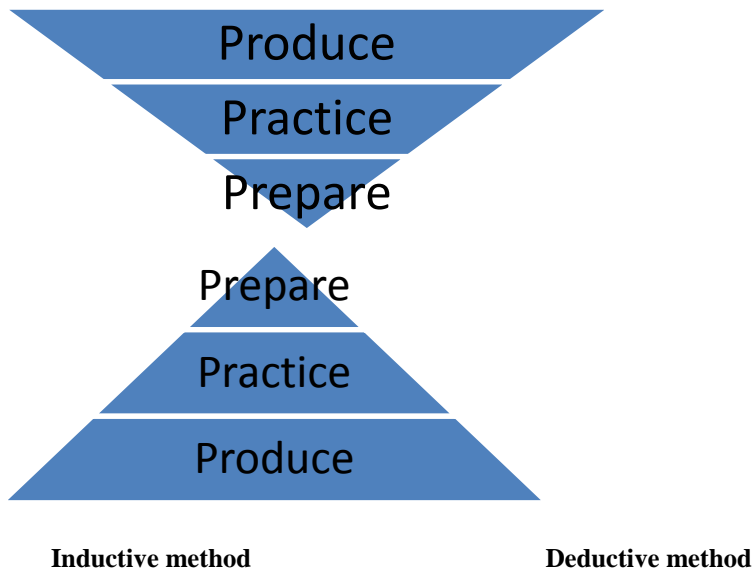
INTRODUCTION

In ELT, the two main theoretical approaches that have been developed to promote the EFL student's success in learning are the inductive and deductive method. The most modern and emerging method is inductive method where the instructions are more student centered. The inductive method represents much advanced and modern style of teaching where the students learn through practice by their own effort, and later explore the theory and technical implementation from the practical examples taught by the teacher. Inductive instruction makes use of student 'noticing'. Instead of explaining a given concept, the teacher presents students with examples

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asking and showing how the concept is used. For an example, the teacher will teach about the quality of a good presentation. Then, in the very beginning, the teacher can show a funny and poor presentation video clip as an example rather than starting the class by announcing the topic or what the teacher is intended to teach. Thus, the students would explore what are the odd things they noticed in the video clip, why those are odd, and how those could be avoided. Later, the teacher will let them know the topic of the lesson and the qualities of a good presentation and its objectives. With this approach students can think on the issue critically, get the autonomy to share their opinion and build up a communicative environment at the same time. Thus, it ensures quick and successful learning which the target of an EFL classroom.

On the other hand, when the teacher applies the more traditional style of teaching, deductive method, students are informed about the topic and learn the theory or rules initially, then implement those through practice. The deductive method is much predictable because teacher selects the information and describes those first. In this approach, the teacher is the centre of the class where students get less opportunity to think creatively and to participate and that narrows down the space to achieve the intended target of an EFL class. Whereas, inductive approach promotes student's participation and practice of the target language to fulfill the learning objectives in a speaking class. The following model, in brief, shows the difference between the two methods:



There are several types of examples and out of them brief example; extended examples and hypothetical examples are more effective. To Lucas (p. 166-168), brief example is a specific instance referred to in passing to illustrate a point. It may also be used to introduce a topic. The other way to use brief example is to pile the ideas one upon the other until the students create the desired impression about the lesson topic. On the other hand, extended examples are called narrative or story at some length to illustrate a point. By telling a story vividly and dramatically the teacher pulls the students to think on the fact and drag them towards learning. Teachers can start class in a more interesting way by using hypothetical example which describes an imaginary or fictitious situation. It is quite effective as the teacher creates a situation and relates it directly to the students to get them involved in learning.

This paper will examine how the use of examples, in the beginning of a class, is more effective to attain communicative goal and creative competence rather than starting the class with definitions or declaring the lesson topics. The study will also refer few recommendations from the effective outcome of practicing the inductive method with examples in the speaking classrooms.

RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The reason why we felt the importance to write on the respective issue is, basically, the current English curricula at tertiary level in Bangladesh emphasizes on communicative learning approach but the actual scenario of the classrooms is different where the teachers sometimes, practice the traditional deductive approach in language classrooms. This proves more striking when it happens, specially, in speaking classes. As an EFL teacher, we found that most of the EFL classrooms are not properly designed where teacher and students face difficulties due to the lack of logistic support, sufficient teaching aids, etc and sometimes, the multi-ability classes and number of students also creates barriers to practice inductive method. But, considering all, an EFL class can be effective to fulfill its objectives if the teachers apply the method by starting class with life like examples. This will balance the multi-ability classroom as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been revolutionary changes in ideas about language teaching methodology over the last 50 years or so. Inductive teaching method in one of the effective and influential methods of teaching in which the teacher begins by presenting students with a specific challenge in the form of examples. Students grappling with the challenge quickly recognize the needs for facts, skills, and conceptual understanding at which point the teacher provides necessary instruction or helps students to learn by their

own. A number of research and article has been published on the respective issue. Prince, M., Professor at Bucknell University in Lewisburg-Pennsylvania and Felder, R., Professor at North Carolina State University have published a joint research on *The many faces of Inductive teaching and learning* which examines the effectiveness and implementation of different inductive teaching methods. They have shown that inductive teaching methods can be applied in many forms, including discovery learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, case-based teaching, task-based teaching and just-in-time teaching. The use of examples is the most effective way among these. What inductive methods have in common is that students are presented with a challenge and then learn what they need to know to address the challenge. It is seen that inductive methods serve as precursors to intellectual development of students as well.

METHODOLOGY

As the primary focus of this investigation is to explore the effective integration of inductive method of teaching with examples in the tertiary EFL speaking classrooms, the study searches the following two questions:

1. How the teachers start a class and give space to the students to associate their ideas creatively on the lesson topics in the very beginning?
2. How much effective is to use examples to the inductive teaching approach?

Since the study depends mostly on teachers' self reported opinions and experiences on speaking classes, a survey research design is selected and the research is based on written survey questionnaires. Because of the time constraint, we used survey questionnaire according to Wiersma (1995, in Karim, 2004), as cited by Scott (2001). To Aleixo (2003), qualitative research has a unique approach to research that draws mostly on multiple sources and on people's views and opinions of specific experiences. Therefore, we find it wise to use a qualitative research approach because of the much dependence on individual teacher's perceptions and experiences of a particular language teaching situation.

Questionnaire

In order to elicit data, questionnaire is used as the main instrument. The questionnaire includes 10 statements along with comments. As the objective of the study is to find out whether teachers follow the inductive method in EFL classes by using examples and how much it is effective to accelerate the communicative competence of the students, the questionnaire is divided into three sections. Section A will attempt to clarify the first research question that is how the teachers start a speaking class and whether they give their students the space to think over the

lesson topics in the very beginning. Section B will focus on the teacher's opinion that how much examples is effective to the inductive teaching approach. Section C will show the random reaction of the participants regarding the research issue. In order to check the comprehensiveness, clarity and representativeness of the interview questionnaire, a pilot testing was conducted

Participants

All the participants in this study are the EFL teachers of four private universities named, Stamford University, BRAC University, Northern University and Eastern University. A total of 10 EFL teachers are randomly selected for the survey who have been teaching speaking courses and taking regular classes.

Sample Process & Size

As the number of the available participants is of manageable size, we did not collected data through sampling. All of available ten participants are taken as population necessary for this research.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND ILLUSTRATION

Section A

As mentioned earlier, section A will be looking at the experience of the EFL teachers that how they start their speaking classes.

Table: 1

1. I start my class by declaring the topic.				
		Yes	No	Total respondent
		7	3	10
Comment 1	7 participants	Sometimes, I feel comfortable and students also feel comfortable if I announce the topic at the beginning.		
Comment 2	3 participants	I start the class with different examples before declaring the topic as my students feel interest.		

Table 1 appears that all the teachers participated in the survey where 7 participants responded 'Yes' to the statement and gave comment that they tell the topics rather than share any example in the beginning of the class. Whereas, 3 participants responds that they start their class with examples

which create positive learning environment and students feel interest towards learning.

Table: 2

2. In the beginning, I inform the students the central idea and main points of the topic and then write those on the board.				
		Yes	No	Total respondent
		6	4	10
Comment 1	6 participants	To give the students guideline on the lesson, I give an outline in the beginning of the class.		
Comment 2	4 participants	This technique draws a teacher centered circle where students get a limited scope to think creatively.		

This table shows that 4 participants found, writing the main points and outlining intended lesson area create a teacher centered classroom where students get limited space to exercise their own thinking power. But, 6 participants think that in the beginning, guideline is more important.

Table: 3

3. In the beginning, I ask questions or describe a situation or story or show pictures or play video related to the lesson topic to drag the students' attention.				
		Yes	No	Total respondent
		7	3	10
Comment 1	7 participants	I describe the definition or fact first, and then discuss examples, show pictures, etc. Thus the students take notes.		
Comment 2	3 participants	This technique involves students to think. It creates interest among them and they get the priority to share their own points of view as well.		

In the above table, 7 participants found that starting a class by telling story or situation or showing pictures is more effective than describing the definition. Only 3 participants responded negatively to this question.

Table: 4

4. In the beginning, I randomly ask the students that whether they have any idea about it (topic based open ended questions or any visual aid related to the lesson).				
		Yes	No	Total respondent
		8	2	10
Comment 1	2 participants	Often students get nervous and hesitate to answer and to state their opinion.		
Comment 2	8 participants	This practice gives space to the students to share their opinion. It equally involves attentive and non- attentive students altogether into the classroom activities.		

This table shows that most of the EFL teachers, 8 participants, have positive experience regarding asking random questions to their students on the lesson topics. They found it effective as this method involves all types of students equally and gives space to share their own opinion. Through this practice, sometimes, new ideas are discovered from the students which raise their confidence. On the other hand, only two participants react negatively to the above statement.

Table: 5

5. In the beginning, I play a game related to the intended lesson topic and at the end let my students to discover what they have learnt through the game.				
		Yes	No	Total respondent
		4	6	10
Comment 1	6 participants	In most cases, the numbers of students, size of classrooms are not suitable to play game but to some extent, it is effective.		
Comment 2	4 participants	This technique creates a positive vibe in the classroom and enhances student's communicative competence. They also enjoy and at the end they discover what they have learnt, what were their mistakes, etc.		

This table shows that 4 participants effectively practice this technique where students enjoy the class and get the opportunity to discover their own mistakes. Thus, the intended learning proves successful at the end of the class. On the other hand, considering the number of students and classroom size, 6 respondents reply, it is not possible always to implement the technique but they agree that it is quite effective.

Above all, this section finds that the number of the participants often practice inductive method due to the size of the classrooms, number of students with multi-ability, lack of logistic support and sometimes proper training of the teachers.

Section B

Section B is designed to elicit the effectiveness of using example in the beginning of the speaking class.

Table: 6

6: If teacher starts the class by illustrating a story or situation as an example, it acts as an ice-breaker.		
Agree	Disagree	Total respondent
9	1	10
7: If teacher starts the class with an example, it acts as a trigger to drag the students to think critically and creates interest among them to learn.		
Agree	Disagree	Total respondent
8	2	10
8: If teacher starts the class by showing any picture or video and asks students what they notice and understand, students will get the space to share their opinion which enhances quick learning and communicative competence.		
Agree	Disagree	Total respondent
8	2	10
9: If teacher starts the class by declaring topic and show examples later, students will get idea about the topic first which is effective than using examples.		
Agree	Disagree	Total respondent
3	7	10

The table appears to be a consensus that all the respondents participated in the survey where most of them agree that using examples are more effective rather than describing definition or declaring the lesson topics in the beginning of class. Unlikely, in the deductive approach of teaching, students just follow the teacher's instruction and lecture, memorize those but, they cannot think critically and exercise communicative activities.

Section C

Section C will focus on the informal comments to get the impression of the EFL teachers regarding the following question.

Ques. 10: Using examples is more effective to the inductive method of teaching in language classrooms. Why and why not?

Participants	Comments
Teacher 1	I always try to start my class with several examples like, writing open ended questions on the board, telling situation or sometimes showing pictures. It creates an interest and a competitive attitude among the students that who can guess the write answer first. This method is very effective in multi-ability classrooms as it compels students to think creatively.
Teacher 2	It is more effective to start a speaking class with an example because it releases student's tension and creates an easy informal conversational atmosphere in the classroom which ensures quick learning rather than stating a class by declaring topics.
Teacher 3	In fact, inductive method is effective but, it is not possible to apply it always. The reasons are lack of logistic support, insufficiency of teaching aids, etc. Some of the students feel comfort if teachers tell the topic and outline of the lesson at the beginning. They think that this practice involves the teacher in the class lectures.
Teacher 4	Sometimes it depends on the level of the students whether I should apply inductive or deductive approach. Specially, in advance level, it is easy to go through the topic first, but except this case, it is quite effective to start a class with an example in a multi-ability classroom.
Teacher 5	Inductive method of teaching is, mostly, effective in speaking classes but sometimes it depends on the ability of students whether they can relate the examples to the main topics given by the teacher.
Teacher 6	The inductive method of teaching definitely enhances student's motivation and encourages them to discover new ideas.
Teacher 7	Inductive method creates a positive learning atmosphere by releasing student's tension and shyness at the very beginning and drags them to participate in communicative activities which are the prime concern of a speaking class. It accelerates their involvements in the class too.
Teacher 8	This method creates the classroom more students centered which builds up their confidence to participate, to communicate and to share their own opinion.
Teacher 9	Examples ensure student's better understanding rather than explaining.

Teacher 10	Starting a class with lots of example, specially taken from everyday life, makes the students interested not only towards syllabus based learning but enrich their knowledge to think beyond it. Students enjoy the class and do not feel boredom.
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In this section, all the respondents share their personal experiences and comments regarding the effectiveness of using examples. They comment why this inductive method is effective and why not. Their comments show that most of the EFL teachers have a positive notion and want to practice this method in their speaking classrooms as this is the modern method of teaching where the classroom will be students and activities based.

SUMMARY CHART OF THE SURVEY

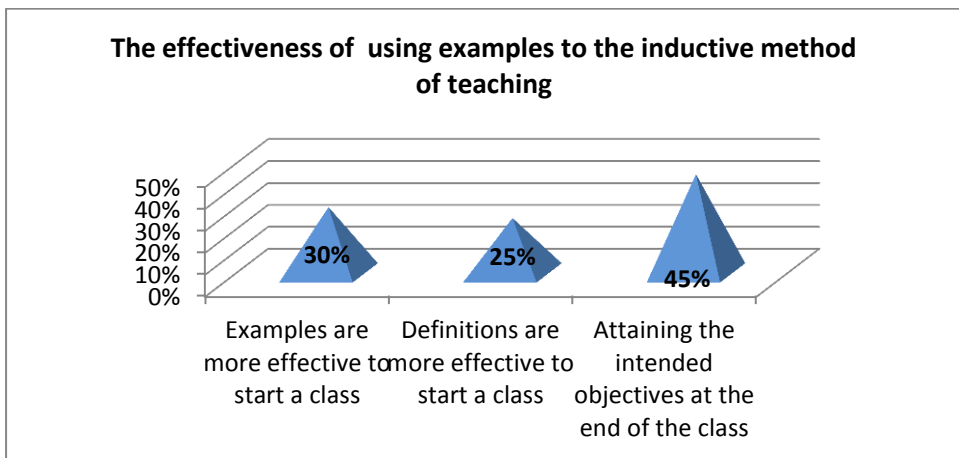


Figure: 1

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The main focus of this study is to explore the effectiveness of inductive method of teaching by using examples in the tertiary level speaking classrooms by searching two questions; whether the teachers start their class with an example and, how much this method is effective. The above figure: 1 shows the summary of the whole survey where about 75% respondents give a positive view to the inductive approach of teaching that using examples are much effective rather than describing definition. They agree that this approach fulfils to attain intended learning objectives of a speaking class through communicative activities. Besides, 25% respondents are still inclined to the deductive approach where they start their class by declaring and writing lesson topics and main points to the students. In more general situation, when teachers deal with the advanced

level students, they are giving the students constant opportunities to think and notice the given examples. Students will usually be more involved in the learning experience and tend to participate more actively to understand and remember when learning occurs inductively.

Inductive method is much learner centered as 'its learner centered and experience-based view of second language teaching' (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 69). In this approach students learn through practice and later they know the definitions and rules. Suppose, teacher can show three human faces; one is happy, one is angry and another one is sad without explaining what the faces are speaking about. The students will find out the three different facial expressions and then guess why they are so. Thus, the teacher would provide many other examples and drags students to share more examples related to the topics. This practice can be done by dividing students into groups or pairs and teachers can play games or role play to let the students discover what they have learnt by doing so. With this approach, the teacher's role is to provide meaningful contexts to encourage demonstration of the rule, while the students evolve the rules from the examples of its use and continued practice (Rivers and Temperley, p. 110). Thus, in the beginning of an EFL class, examples -

- act as an ice breaker
- create curiosity among the students
- trigger students to think critically
- give space to share their own opinion
- discover new ideas from the students
- drag their attention towards learning
- involve them into classroom activities
- develop confidence as individual speaker
- enhance communicative competence through equal participation
- act as tool for better understanding and quick learning

CONCLUSION

As far as learning through communicative activities is the prime concern of a language classroom, inductive method of teaching is one of the modern and highly effective methods which promotes increased student participation and practice of the target language in meaningful context by enhancing their own confidence and communicative competence in the classroom. The present study examines that the tertiary level EFL teachers are practicing inductive method in a small scale though they better understand the principles of inductive method, as well as explores how it works in language classrooms.

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