

# Emphasizing the Need to Restrict the Use of Non – target Languages in the ESL Classroom and Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Communicative Approach as a Solution

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Referring to the corpus of literature made with reference to the discipline of ELT, it seems conspicuously interesting that the use of non – target languages in the language classroom has recently become the subject of many a debate among most ESL practitioners. In such a milieu, the objective of the present research paper has been to explore the negative consequences that the extensive use of non – target languages in the ESL classroom poses not merely on the learning process but on the classroom management too. It is a widely acknowledged fact that both acquisition and retention of language skills have an equally significant role in the learning of a language. And, experts are of the belief that one of the most productive ways of learning a language is by picking it up (i.e. first listening to and reading a lot of language in authentic contexts and then using language in interaction with others for real purposes). Further, this gives rise to the fact that the ESL classroom should become a fountain of exposure to the target language where the students get a plenty of opportunities to receive and produce language and hence to experiment with language. Nevertheless, it is disheartening to note that a majority of the ESL teachers in the country hardly use the target language in order to communicate with the learners and to give instructions to them. Instead they speak in a particular non – target language which might be the first language of the majority in the classroom. As revealed above, this situation deprives the learners of the opportunity to have an L2 – interactive classroom thus directly affecting the learning of the language. In addition, the present study takes into account the socio-cultural and psychological facets of the situation under review. Thus, it explores the inconveniences undergone by the students hailing from minority communities when a majority in the classroom including the teacher communicates in a language (most probably the L1 of the majority) which might be alien to them. The issues of this kind have a special relevance to a country like Sri Lanka which is comprised of various ethnicities. So, it appears to be the responsibility of the language teacher as a facilitator to adjust the classroom management such that it enables the learners to be well exposed to the target language. Also, the research anticipates assessing the effectiveness of a communicative approach as a solution to the problems mentioned earlier. It is hence expected that this paper will serve as a useful source of information for those who are interested in the subject under review.

**Key Words:** Acquisition, Retention, Exposure, Instruction, Communication, Ethnicities