Esl teaching methodologies

Education, Teaching

The techniques and approaches found in TESOL differ dramatically from those of other areas of teaching because of its student centred and dynamic nature. Furthermore, since TESOL takes place in a multiculturalenvironment; that is, the ESL classroom, intercultural aspects should also be considered, addressed, and ideally, taught. As a result, thecultural diversityfound in TESOL and the interactive nature of this field of teaching has an impact on the way language is presented and practised.

According to the online articled Why to activate your ESL students' Background Schema, published by Laura Greenwood (2011) on bridgetefl. com, " it is important to activate your students' experiences with and knowledge of the topic of the listening/ reading". By activating students' schematta, theteacheris not only directing the students into the topic and creating interest in it but also encouraging them to use language in context.

Additionally, experienced and creative ESL teachers may be able to pre-teach contextualized vocabulary whilst activating students' schematta because any unknown lexical items found in listening and reading passages are in fact related to the topic of the text/listening, so the teacher has a context to teach (elicit) these words. Another important strategy adopted by ESL teachers is language elicitation.

Rather than introducing a word by saying: " this is a word and that is what it means" or teaching a grammar point by simply telling the students its rules and form, TESOL teachers often use an essential technique called elicitation, through which students can be involved in the process of discovering and understanding anguage; that is, the teacher uses different techniques to

elicit lexical items or grammatical structures that they want to introduce to their students.

However, it is usually the case that ESL learners may not know the word or grammatical item that the teacher is trying to elicit, but they will at least know the concept of the linguistic item intended to be taught, which is still relevant, because knowing the concept of a word or grammar point is considered to be as important as knowing the form. Eliciting" (2009, section 4) states that there are cultures where students are more sed to a teacher centred way of knowledge instruction, which means that they see the teacher as the only person who has the authority to provide knowledge, therefore when eliciting language, TESOL teachers should consider the fact that students from these cultures are less likely to actively participate when the class are asked open questions (who can tell me...? Does anybody know...?), and instead try to nominate students to answer questions more often. In fact, the ideal ESL teacher is described by Harmer, J. (2007, p. 08) as " one who is democratic rather than autocratic, and one who fosters learner autonomy through the use of group work and by acting more of a resource than a transmitter of knowledge", which contradicts the role of the teacher in many cultures, where they are seen as the sole provider of knowledge.

However, when activating schematta and eliciting language, which are essential techniques adopted in TESOL, the students' input is vital, and in order to achieve that, different teachers with different personalities and teaching styles use different techniques to It is common knowledge that

language andcultureare interrelated, and through the language, English in this regard, ESL learners can, or ideally they should, acquire intercultural knowledge in order to communicate more competently. With this concept in mind, Ability English - an ELICOS centre in Sydney - included an interculturalcommunicationprogram in their syllabus.

Nicholas Kirk, who is the director of studies and designed the course, argues that " it is almost impossible to teach language in isolation from culture", therefore he believes that cross-cultural ommunication should be taught in order to help ESL students use their language skills more effectively. Role plays, group activities, reading and listening passages, videos, among other resources and types of activities can be used to practise language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing) and other linguistics elements, such as grammar, lexis, and pronunciation, while training students so that they can achieve intercultural competence.

In other words, ESL teachers can raise students' awareness to cross-cultural areas, including eye contact, personal space, body anguage, face-saving, individualism and collectivism, and concurrently, or possibly subsequently, use the contextualized content to practise and/or introduce language, enhancing not only their students' language skills but also their interpersonal and interactional effectiveness.

Having the language skills is undoubtedly necessary in order to be in contact with people from different cultures, but understanding such cultures is also important in this globalized world, especially in the workplace, since the ultimate goal of ESL learners is to be able to use English to successfully

ommunicate with people from other cultural backgrounds. Considering the fact that TESOL allows more flexibility than in other fields of teaching, and that language is a vital element of culture, linguistic and cross-cultural aspects may be taught in conjunction by ESL teachers.

In sum, I would like tostressthat the teacher's knowledge of the linguistic items being taught is unarguably important in TESOL, as it is in all areas of teaching; however, in the ESL teaching context, it is equally important to use a variety of ethods and strategies to get the students to actively participate in their learning process, since the ESL classroom is an environment where the focus is on the students, rather than on the teacher, resulting in more STT than TTT, which is a primary concept in TESOL.

ESL students have one goal in common: to learn English to be able to communicate with people from different cultures, but due to multicultural nature of ESL classes, TESOL teachers need to be culturally sensitive, and if possible, in addition to teaching language, devote some time to training their students to be ore inter-culturally competent to help them use language in a multicultural context more effectively.