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THE ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT WITH REFERENCE TO SRI LANKA

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Abstract

As per Sri Lankan university students, English is not just a language but also a cultural component. Most of the time it seems difficult to divert these passive learners into active and energetic language learners. Hence, the language laboratory in the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna was decided to incorporate into language learning as a new mechanism. In order to analyze the role of the language laboratory in learning English, closed ended questionnaires were distributed among 150 Science students. 30 students plus all the teachers who worked at the faculty of Science were also interviewed. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings revealed that the laboratory was a great motive. Students started attending lectures. It provided them relaxation, exposure to authentic language, confidence, individuality, interactions, and immediate feedbacks. It was the best place to practice listening and speaking. Nevertheless, the laboratory was not successful in practicing reading and writing than the traditional classroom. In fact, it was neither a problem related to the laboratory nor a matter with the students. It was a problem

with the teachers, who failed to implement creative lesson materials. Teachers' creativity, up to date knowledge, and selection of software will decide the attainment. Language laboratory is not a substitution for a teacher. Traditional classroom is not a dull place either that we should forget. Therefore, a well-adjusted approach will make the language laboratory a perfect strategy in the long-term success of the language learning process.

Key words

Second Language, Passive Learners, Language Laboratory, Technology, Authentic Language

1. Introduction

Currently, English is the most widely spoken language in the world. It is a world language and is the major language of news and information (Mercy, 2016). Hence, one cannot doubt the important role English plays within the modern day knowledge driven economic and political systems. Thus, a working knowledge of English has become an utmost necessity especially for the university students in order to survive in the competitive world (Karunaratne, 2014). In modern university contexts, English has become the primary medium of gaining knowledge and it acts as a gateway in securing employment (Perera, 2013).

‘How to enhance the language learning process of nonnative adult speakers’ is a widely spread debate all over the world because unlike L1 acquisition, which is uniformly successful across children and languages, adults vary considerably in their ability to acquire L2 completely. Some people are very talented language learners. Others are hopeless. Most people fall somewhere in the middle. Success may depend on a range of factors (Fromkin et al, 2003).

Sri Lankan universities has a long history for the attempts made by second language professionals to change English teaching and learning into an innovative and interesting process. Thus, in this era where technology plays a predominant role in teaching and learning English as a second language it is thoroughly believed that technology can bring a new light into age old teaching and learning practices of English.

The concept of ‘language laboratory’ has emerged as a novel and popular technological innovation. ‘Laboratory’ was not a hot concept but as this is all about teaching and learning in a language laboratory, many positive outcomes were expected.

Considering the University of Ruhuna for its whole history it was the Faculty of Science, which implemented a language laboratory (referred as lab), for its students to learn English with 35 computers and a fixed multimedia projector. The lab is used in tow folds as a

Computer Assisted Lab (CALL) and a Web Assisted Lab (WALL), which boost the morale of the graduates to increase their taste in learning English as Second Language and teachers to teach English for the undergraduates. Undoubtedly, it created many opportunities for both language teachers and learners to come out with a number of novel activities with the use of internet, computers and the multimedia projector. “Language lab provides a platform where teachers can try experiments on themselves and the learners as well. By observing and reflecting on their own problems and failures as learners, English teachers can seek to establish principles, which will help them improve their teaching.” (Hafiz, 2013)

The students’ participation for the classes was increased and teacher motivation was high and it obviously changed the dull and negative mindsets created previously inside the faculty that language teaching and learning was limited to lengthy handouts and traditional classrooms, which were highly teacher centric.

Hence with the aim to find out the role played by the language laboratory to exploit it far better in teaching and learning English the researcher has developed the main objectives of the research as to

- Find out the effectiveness of using language lab in learning English as a second language.
- Identify the difference in learning English in a usual classroom and a language lab and find out more effective ways improve the quality of the English teaching and learning process in the university with the use of technology.

2. Research Problem

Low attendance for the language classes, high failure rate and low marks for English are common occurrences in the University of Ruhuna. In the Faculty of Science, although the grade achieved for English didn’t influence the respected ‘class’ of a student, it is mandatory to pass English to obtain the degree and selected for a special degree programme as required by certain the departments. Nevertheless, the students did not have enthusiasm to be committed to language learning. The majority of the students attended classes just to maintain the 80% of their attendance. They hardly engaged with language activates in a lively manner. Thus, the teachers constantly complained that the students have no need to learn English. In such a context, the language lab was introduced expecting good results with the strong belief that the language lab has the capacity to transform a language lesson into a new form and format minimizing motivating the second language learners.

3. Research Questions

Hence, the following research questions are intended to address through the investigation.

- Does the language lab able to improve four skills; reading, writing, speaking and grammar of the undergraduates and how does it help to improve the four skills?
- Does the language lab motivate students to attend classes and participate actively in learning English as a Second Language?
- What are the attitudes of the students' about the use of the language laboratory in improving their second language skills?
- Is language lab useful in teaching English to university students? Do the teachers find it an effective and innovative strategy in teaching English?

4. Literature review

4.1 Role of English Teaching and Learning in Sri Lankan Universities

The role of English teaching and learning in Sri Lankan university education has become a fascinating topic for many researchers. One can easily garner that English within the context of Sri Lanka is not a mere language of communication or expression. In the 21st Century Sri Lanka, access to English is akin to being born with a silver spoon in one's mouth. It is the language of upward mobility, and the privileged society, whose home language is English (Manique Gunsekera, 2005). Many of the undergraduates coming from rural areas in Sri Lanka do not possess a sufficient knowledge of English. The youth who have very little English education will suffer due to their inabilities and to overcome such difficulties, English is taught in universities for a few hours per week even without much success. That very typical approach is obvious in many universities. (Wijethunga, 1989). In Sri Lanka, the teacher was the source of all knowledge. There was largely one-way traffic between the teacher and student with the teacher transmitting knowledge and the student supposed to absorb this transmitted knowledge. In Sri Lanka, particularly this situation was further intensified due to the exam-oriented nature of our education system. The main instrumental motivation for students was to somehow absorb as much knowledge as possible and reproduce it at the exam. Such a teaching approach did little to cultivate an environment of learning or a spirit of critical inquiry (Rambukwella, 2016).

In most of the cases, the backward and anxious language learners are further marginalized or isolated. This is common in most of the language class rooms in Sri Lankan universities. The teachers are expected to be closer to the learners and share their experience

in order to make the learners feel free to learn. They need to reduce the anxiety and erroneous notions regarding learning English. “Conversely, some other EFL instructors had increased students' tension by forcing them to participate or through overt correction of mistakes. Indeed, the teacher's rapport with the students is vital in decreasing anxiety. Student will appreciate and learn more from teachers who are able to identify students experiencing anxiety and take proper measures to help them overcome that anxiety.” (Mouhoubi-Messadh, 2017, Pg.21)

Moreover, the inability to offer students a balanced course based on a sound philosophy, which could motivate the students to attend classes, despite its credit weightage, is something, which seriously affects their role, status, and function. Many ELTU's attempt to teach grammar and engage in making materials, which are absolutely grammar, based. The students study English as they study any other recommended subject for the degree. They copy notes as and keep carefully without revising them until the final examination. This idea is mistaken. They should understand that language learning is a continuous process and skill learning and not a content learning. (Wijethunga, 1989). Irshad 2017 quoting Perera 2010 pointed the English language programmes in the universities have not supported the vast majority of students to communicate in English efficiently or to be armed with language skills to discover the developing world of learning and thus it has resulted in declining the quality of higher education in Sri Lanka. Thus, insufficient knowledge of English reckoned to be a serious difficulty that hampered students from getting the best out of their university education Therefore, it is believed that if technology was brought into language learning it would be more effective.

4.2 Language Laboratory

Currently technology has surpassed everything in its progress and computer technology has become a necessary tool for learning. However, so far in the university history of Sri Lanka there are a very few laboratories implemented for language teaching and learning as many of the laboratories were aimed at scientific and mathematical purposes. (Irshad, 2015). Although language labs are not, commonly use in Sri Lankan universities there is a strong trend to go for technology based language learning and teaching dealing with higher education. Language labs provide quick access for both the teachers and students. Language labs provide education + entertainment-making language teaching more result oriented.

Mecy in 2016 talking about the history of language laboratory pointed that the word language laboratory supported positively when compared to traditional language teaching

methods. It is convenient for both the low and high achievers and can solve many language problems. Thus, teaching English through Language Laboratory is one of the appropriate and effective methods for teaching English. According to Al-Hmoud in 2014, English laboratory is a powerful tool with which students can acquire the target language in a low anxiety setting and interesting, rich and comprehensive input. He has found that Students had positive attitudes towards using English labs for learning and practicing English pronunciation.

As per Wilga M. Rivers (1970) a language lab offers a series of advantages for language learners and language teachers. According to her, the students have the opportunity to hear a great variety of foreign voices; the students may hear and use the foreign language throughout the laboratory session and the lab frees the teacher from certain problems of class directions and classroom management. Anyway, the teacher's role is important, as she has to be very careful that all the selected materials will boost the interest of the students. Rather than making the students disappointed and frustrated, it is the role of the teacher to understand the requirements of the students. As Navas quoted Antich et al. (1988), the main purposes of the language laboratory are to make the individual practice of students more effective, and increase the productivity of language teachers. However, language lab alone cannot play the role as the effectiveness of the language laboratory directly depends on the teacher's creativity and the activities he or she is going to use. Language lab is a very helpful tool to practice all four-communication skills. It gives freedom for learners to perform their own pace. The students can listen to model pronunciation, repeat and record the same, listen to their performance and compare with the model, and do self-assessment. The electronic devices used in the laboratory stimulate the eyes and ears of the learner to acquire the language quickly and easily (Batra & Tiwari 2016).

Patel (2013) talking about Multimedia teaching highlighted the fact that this method makes the class interesting and lively enhancing the initiatives of both teachers and students. The electronic devices used in laboratory stimulate the eyes and ears of the learner to acquire the language quickly and easily (Patel quoted Thayalan and Wilson, 2007). Language labs provides a broad range of activities for the students speaking the target language. There are some learners, who are shy to perform in front of a large gathering and Language laboratories help such students overcome shyness by providing them some privacy in the use of headset/microphone and tend to make them anonymous. (Kin-Sys.2007) In the language laboratory, learners are exposed to different listening and speaking drills, which enhance communication. Language learning with language laboratories is flexible and convenient for language learners as well as useful in accessing native language materials (Koerner, 1988). However, we should

not find a lab as a sort of tireless teacher's aid that could drill the mechanical aspects of language, freeing the teacher for more creative activities. (Underwood, 1984). Lado (1964) thus supporting Underwood pointed that we should not consider lab as a substitute for a language teacher. Therefore, language labs always need better-prepared teachers to conduct the sessions. Thus, we need a holistic integration; technology, teachers and students.

5. Hypothesis

As the research is an attempt to find out the role of the language laboratory in teaching and learning English as a second language in a university context the investigators were in an idea that the language laboratory motivates language teachers and students, which will eventually help in enhancing the language skills of the university students. Thus, it is hypothesized that the language laboratory has a positive impact on learning English as a second language.

6. Methodology

The research design was fundamentally, based on a descriptive mode of analysis. However, simple calculations (percentage) were done to make the research more effective by using SPSS Package. For the purpose of the analysis, the researcher randomly selected 150 students from the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka representing 50 students from each year (first, second and third year) who attended lab sessions for more than three months. Variables like gender, ethnicity and sex did not consider when selecting the sample. The students were given questionnaires formulated on a quantitative basis carrying twenty close-ended questions. Likewise, focus group discussions were carried out in the same way consisting 30 students divided into three groups containing 10 in each group representing all the three academic years. In addition, the language teachers of the Faculty of Science were also interviewed using a semi structured interview method. Further, observations were also done during language lab hours. Besides, the researcher has already analyzed the relevant literature.

7. Limitations

The research only deals with the University of Ruhuna, Faculty of Sciences. The research limiting to single faculty itself is a limitation. If it is possible to expand the study up to international university contexts where English is the second language and language lab plays a major role it will be more effective. That will give more insights in to the research

and will provide more opportunities to come out with outstanding data. Further, the comparisons can do as government vs. private universities. In future studies more data can obtain by carrying exploratory nature of researches. In the lab context, it is easy to do pre-test, post-test, and analyze data to find out the effectiveness of using language lab in learning English as a second language. Learning English is a controversial issue in the entire history of Sri Lankan universities. Since the research dealt with English Language, lifelong prejudices of the students' regarding English too could affect the results. Hence, there is a big risk of gaining fake and fabricated information. The researcher faced difficulties in obtaining exact individual responses for the questionnaires from the students because all the time most of the students attempted to discuss the questions and answer them as groups. Due to language issues of the students sometimes the researcher had to explain the questions in the first language. Otherwise, the students would ended up in irrelevant responses. Further, it was also complicated to reach the sample population due to their daily academic routine. Anyway, it believes that this research will open new frontiers for the future research to overcome all the drawbacks in achieving more sound results.

8. Results and discussion

8.1 Preference of students and general overview regarding lab sessions

100% of the students pointed that their selection was the language lab as they have benefited a great deal from the lab sessions. With the introduction of the lab sessions the attendance of the students immensely increased and the teacher motivation was high. The classes were live and interesting. The lab setting has provided the students a new taste to learn English with sounds, visual aids, and interactive activities. As teachers pointed out students' motivation, self-esteem, and confidence were surprisingly high in their learning process. Despite all the positive factors, some students participated lab sessions just to have fun and enjoy the comfort created due to air-condition, rotating chairs and flexible environment. What Hafiz pointed as ICT tools can enhance English language teaching and these tools have removed the limitation of time and space found in traditional language teaching again proved here (2013).

60% of the sample population mentioned that they used the lab one hour per week regularly and the rest of the 40% indicated that they rarely used the lab. The class teacher did the selection whether to teach in lab or classroom and some teachers pointed that, it was bit difficult to shift into a technological setting without practice and hence they need the assistance of a young staff member or a lab assistant. Thus, they preferred to be in usual

classrooms as receiving help from a staff member may damage their reputation in front of their students. Further, some language teachers pointed that although they had one lab, three groups of students were to be taught by three teachers in one time slot. In that circumstance, some students missed the chance to use the lab in learning English.

Further, the students were questioned regarding how far they found the learning activities accomplished in the lab interesting. It was significant that 54% pointed that the activities were interesting to a great deal and 36% assumed quite a lot. Just 10% was in the idea that they had a slight interest over the activities performed in the lab. During the interviews, the students pointed that the activities performed in the lab were interesting because they enhanced interaction and involvement in collaborative learning. There were greater opportunities for communication and no fear of being spotted. The learners got enough freedom to learn at their own pace.

However, the students who had less taste towards the language lab, indicated that the atmosphere was threatening as they have hardly used computers in doing language activities. The lack of experience with computers in performing activities like listening and writing made them slow and nervous. Nowadays, the stereotyped traditional teaching methods and environment are unpopular while multimedia technology featuring audio, visual animation effects naturally and humanely makes us more access to information. It greatly promotes students' interest and inspiration in study and their participation in class activities. (Patel, 2013)

The majority of 76% was happy if teachers used language lab and just 14% was neutral whereas only 10% unhappy. In the interviews, the students pointed that it was tedious to learn long lengthy handouts in traditional classrooms. They hardly did listening activities and almost the major focus was grammar. Thus, the majority liked the change. As Patel in 2103 pointed, it was the multimedia technology teaching which uniquely inspired students' positive thinking and communication skills in social practice. It goes beyond time and space, creates more vivid, visual, genuine environment for English learning, encourages students' creativities, and economizes class time meanwhile upsurges class information.

Here also the learners felt better with authentic materials. The students who had technophobia preferred the classroom as best to learn English and a very few expressed the fact that they like to learn in classroom because whenever they used language lab their teacher did not go beyond listening activities and thus it was so tiresome.

8.2 Impact of the lab on four language skills

The students were questioned regarding their listening ability. Out of 150 students, 58% pointed that listening was difficult, 22% found it was easy and 20% did not have a clear idea about their listening ability. Among the problems related to listening 38% highlighted, it was the speed of speech, for 40% it was the different accents, and 22% pointed that they had issues because of the colloquial words. As Nadjah (2013) quoted Underwood many English language learners believe that the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension, because the listener cannot control how quickly a speaker speaks (1989) It was also proved here. Assuming that the language lab helps to improve the pronunciation 68% said lab helped a great deal to develop pronunciation, 20% pointed it helped quite a lot and just 12% was in the idea that it helped a little to enhance pronunciation skills. From the sample, 62% strongly agreed with the fact that listening can better practice in the lab than in the traditional classroom, 22% agreed whereas just 16% was neutral. Significantly, no one disagreed or strongly disagreed. Considering the entire set of questions the positive responses took a major place here.

Analyzing the qualitative data, the research can highlight many significant findings. In the traditional classrooms, the teachers said they hardly paid attention to listening. Listening was a forgotten skill due to a large number of students and lack of facilities. Listening and reading were always considered as receptive skills yet speaking and writing as productive ones. EFL teachers always give attention to the productive skills and the other skills are somehow overlooked and teachers are not aware about its significance in English language learning (Nadjah, 2013).

In traditional classroom, even the teachers who read the passage were in tension because they did not know whether the students have understood what they read or not. Thus the teachers pointed that classroom was not the best atmosphere to practice listening. Even in a research conducted by Navas Brenes pointed that lab was the best place to practice listening because the students can listen to all the mistakes they made, concentration was high due to less external noises, relax and comfortable and the teacher who was there was a sign of confidence for the students (2013).

The students said it was so boring to listen to the passages read by their teachers. Actually, the teacher was a non-native who read the passage and it was a disadvantage for the students because once they used to non-native voices of English they found it challenging to understand English spoken by natives of the language whenever they expose to the native voice. Thus, lab helped students to listen a great variety of foreign voices, authentic native

speech clearly distinctly. Lab helped students to be familiar with different aspects of language such as accent, stress etc.

As Nadjah (2013) quoting Harmer intensive listening usually occurs in classrooms or language laboratories with, of course, the guides of the teacher, it typically occurs when teachers are present to direct students during listening and help them if they face any difficulties, as well as points them to spots of interest (2007). Actually, the students found that lab was the best place to conduct intensive listening; that was listening with a purpose. The students got enough freedom to listen to a passage or a dialogue several times they liked. They could work at their own pace. Students can make mistakes, which no one would know, and they can correct it as well. In the traditional classroom setting it was the teacher who got the sole authority to decide what to read, where to stop and what to repeat again. Nevertheless, here the listeners got the sole autonomy to play the tape several times until the teacher gave the command to stop or until the given time finishes. The students revealed that this was the best place to listen to the correct language patterns or the correct pronunciation. There is no need to imitate those who can pronounce well, as they can listen to it via headphones.

However, some students pointed that it was so boring to attend the listening activities performed in the lab simply because every day they got the same pattern of listening exercises. As Navas (2103) quoting Underwood pointed that due to the fact that language instructors did not know how to implement creative tasks especially designed for the lab session, students were developing a strong distaste for language labs, a distaste that unfortunately carried over to language learning in general (1984). It was applicable to the current study as well, because some students felt lab was a time waster and they were exhausted. Every day they got listening test activities, teacher told the correct answers, and the students marked and once the teacher asked their marks students felt it bit irritating to reveal their marks in front of the other students. There were students who found it difficult to adjust to the new listening atmosphere because it was the first time in their life they were going to listen to native voice through headphones. It was difficult for them to catch different accents, words, and pronunciation. On the teachers' side, they pointed that they did not have time to prepare new listening materials and it was hard. Thus they continued what they were given and introduced without doing any change.

Considering writing, 32% pointed that they enjoyed the writing tasks performed in the language lab whereas 20% said no and the majority of 48% was in the response of 'no idea'. 22% of the sample population indicated they have improved their vocabulary through the

exercises performed in the lab. Nevertheless, 14% was in the idea of 'no' whereas the majority of 64% had no idea about the positive impact of the writing tasks on their vocabulary development. The research questioned the students regarding to what extent language lab helped to improve their writing skills and a low percentage of 8 pointed that it was a great deal, 24% indicated quite a lot and the majority of 68% was in the idea that lab helped a very little to improve the writing skill. Finally, for the question that writing can better practice in the lab than in the classroom, just 2% strongly agreed, 32% agreed, the majority of 46% was neutral and 20% disagreed. It was significant that many of the students were in doubt whether the lab influenced them positively or not, in improving their writing skills.

The qualitative data also revealed the students found writing bit boring. In the first few days, they said that it was interesting because they had to work with the mouse and key board for the first time in doing their writing exercises. Immediate corrections and individual practice made writing interesting. They have learned a lot about proper sentence constructions also. Nevertheless, the students pointed that the lab lost the collaborative writing, which happened well in the traditional classroom. Thus, the students revealed that with the time, they had to repeat the same writing exercises several times and everyday it was error finding, blank filling, or rearranging jumble sentences. Work in isolation did not bring them any enthusiasm. Some of them pointed that they need something more because it was a waste of time to go to the lab to practice such activities, which can even simply download and can do at home. Some students indicated that they took much time and completed one exercise as they had issues of typing speed and they were not used to carry on writing tasks with the use of technology.

For teachers this gave kind of a relaxation. They said that they did not interrupt for what students did because the computers provided immediate corrections. Thus, the teachers' point was some exercises stimulated the eyes and years of the students to acquire the language quickly and easily.

The population depicted several issues regarding their spoken ability. 30% indicated that they were shy to speak, 18% said that they did not have confidence and the majority of 40% pointed that it was difficult to speak in English. Only 12% said that they were forward in Speak in English. It was significant that 98% said speaking tasks performed in lab was interesting and just 2% was in the idea that they were not interesting. Then the research questioned the population regarding whether they dynamically participated and interacted with others during speaking activities. Remarkably, 88% said 'yes', just 4% pointed 'no', and

a small amount of 8% did not have any idea about that. For the fact that language lab motivated them to enhance their communicative skills the majority of 78% strongly agreed, 16% agreed and just 6% was in a neutral response. Entirely there were no negative responses and all the positive responses recorded to be above 50%.

During the interviews, almost all the students said that they were thrilled and so happy to be in the lab in doing speech activities. They really liked the short films and discussions. They said that the learning atmosphere was very active, live, highly interactive, relax and non-threatening. Thus, they got the chance to use the existed knowledge to the maximum in doing group activities. It was not boring, but very challenging and they learned a lot from their peers. They also exposed to sounds, words, and native speakers' environments. The multimedia created them a vivid, visual, and authentic environment for learning. The students revealed that they were highly interactive in speech activities and they had developed their communicative competence to a great deal. Teachers also pointed the same that it was enthusiastic to conduct speech activates in the lab. "With teachers' instructions leading students' thought patterns and motivating students' emotions, the multimedia technology seeks integration of teaching and learning and provides the students greater incentives, The PPT courseware activate students' thinking; the visual and vivid courseware rand help them to transforms English communication into capacity cultivation." (Patel, 2013, Pg. 117)

Even the weakest had more opportunities and the slow-learners were thrilled about learning. All together, the lab helped a lot in teaching and learning communicative skills. The personality of the students developed and they learned a lot to handle formal and informal situations. Hence, lab was a successful implementation in speaking.

Considering the reading ability 24% found it interesting, 32% said reading was difficult and the majority of 44% indicated reading was a boring task. The majority of 72% had no idea considering the fact that their taste for reading increased because of the language lab activities. Regarding the same, just 16% said 'yes' and 12% said 'no'. Just a small number of 8% believed that they have improved their reading skills to a greater extend as a result of the language lab and 10% said 'no' and the majority of 82% didn't have any idea about that. The research questioned the population regarding whether reading can better practiced in the lab than in the usual classroom. 4% strongly agreed with the idea, 28% agreed, 50% was neutral and 18% was disagreed. It was significant that less enthusiasm was obvious regarding the reading exercises performed in the lab setting.

The qualitative data did not reveal many positive inclinations regarding reading skills. They students said that they rarely done reading in the lab and it was boring. As reading, they

read a text and ticked the correct answers. That was the only task they did. They did not do loud reading and did not record for the self-analysis.

The teachers revealed that they got a very few tasks regarding reading and they did not do anything beyond that. Many of the teachers pointed that they did not have sound technological skill to handle novel and standards software related to reading. Hence, they thought the classroom was the best to conduct reading tasks.

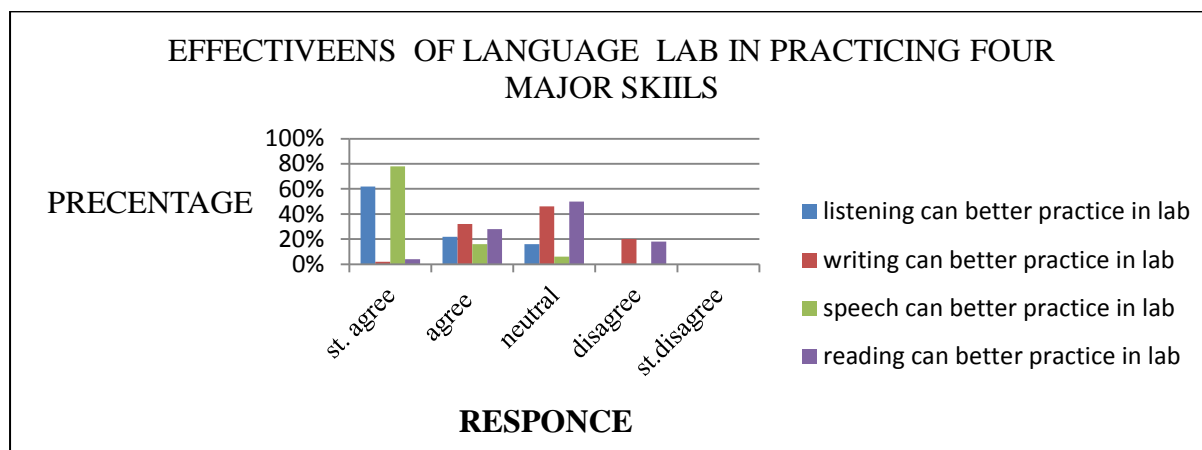


Figure 1: *The overall impact of the language lab on four major skills*

8.3 Further implications

Significantly, 58% noted that they had benefitted from the lab a great deal, 30% indicted quite a lot, and just 12% said they benefitted a little. During interviews, the researcher found that the lab has created a new taste and good impression for both the teachers and the students. For them stepped in to a lab itself was a change. They really liked the change.

The research gave four choices under this and the majority of 72% said they strongly agreed with the statement, 22% agreed and just a small number of 6% was neutral. There were no responses for the choices such as disagree and strongly disagree.

The qualitative data proved that many of the students found it interesting to learn English in the lab. As science students, working with technology was not difficult and despite a very few many of them had the required technological accuracy. Thus, it was a thrill for them to learn English with the use of technology. They were very forward in participating the language activities performed in the lab. The teachers revealed that many of the students even forced them to go to the lab in occasions where they had to conduct lectures in the usual classrooms. Lab has created a flexible, interactive, and a learner centered environment.

Actually, texts, images, sounds, audio-visual aids, and interactive activities enhanced learners' interest in language lab classes. Generally, the students depicted a high self-esteem and confidence in engaging with language exercises performed in the language lab.

The research questioned the idea that whether the learning activities need to improve, keep same, or need to change. The majority of 74% said it was better if we could improve the activities further, 8% said it is all right to keep as it was and 14% indicated that the activities need to change.

When interviewing, the students pointed that they really liked many of the activities performed in the lab. Nevertheless, they found it boring when the same types of activities were repeated several times. The reading and writing activities they performed, had repeated in many occasions and the students had found it dull and a waste of time. Thus, they expected something novel every day. Therefore, the majority was in the idea that the activities need to be improved.

Even the teachers pointed that they need to change and improve some activities. Here some were in the idea that they did not have sound knowledge to deal with technology and in that sense, this would take a lot of time. Thus, some languages teachers did not like to sacrifice additional time and energy for designing new exercises. Simply they were in an idea to continue what they were introduced and what they had.

The majority of 74% pointed that lab is an essential component in learning English. 20% pointed that lab helps to improve English a great deal and 6% indicated it helps to improve English to a certain extent. Nevertheless, no one was in the idea that language lab is a waste of time.

The qualitative data also proved lab was a successful intervention in language teaching and learning. It was necessary. With the ever-changing advanced technologies even language learning was difficult to do limiting to a traditional setting. Hence, lab should be needed in many aspects.

9. Conclusion

The study proved the fact that language lab was a good mechanism in converting the demotivated second language learners into active language learners and the dull language learning and teaching atmosphere into energetic learning and teaching atmosphere. Actually, language Lab has created a new taste among students. Teachers and learners had positive attitudes towards the new implementation.

Nevertheless, language lab alone cannot be the harbinger of the second language learning and teaching process because the majority of the students did not find it a very effective strategy in the processes of writing and reading. This should research and analyze further.

Thus, it was essential to use the lab not as a substitute for a teacher or a traditional classroom, but as a useful mechanism in bringing a change to the teacher and the traditional classroom. Considering writing the language lab itself cannot develop the taste for writing and the intervention of a teacher is highly required. It is essential to implement creative and a collaborative language-learning atmosphere. Creative writing will be a good approach. To teach grammar the language teacher can use a web based teaching method. Further standard software can introduce and incorporate to develop the writing ability. "Technology provides a right kind of platform which helps develop the writing strategies and skills. Technology makes writing interesting. However, the intervention of a teacher is highly required. It is the job of a teacher to give them tasks that could motivate them to write and communicate with the other students using technology." (Hariharan, 2011, Pg. 03)

So as writing practicing reading inside the lab too was found boring and ineffective by the students. However, students did loud reading in the classroom but they kept silent in the lab. If the learners can provide the facilities to listen to a model reading, then read by them and record for self-analysis reading will be more interesting. Instead of reading simply for finding answers, the teacher can introduce exercises for critical reading and can introduce on-line reading tests. The same material should not be used many times.

Teacher as a facilitator can give the assistance individually and collectively. They can introduce group activities. "In a group activity, students can discuss a subject with the partners and can reduce inhibitions to speaking. In a paired conversation, a learner can overcome the fear of being spotted. Learners can be taught to create power point slides with live demos. A teacher can view their monitor screens for effective monitoring of the class." (Navas, 2013) To enhance listening skills teachers can follow the three steps model; preparation before class (before listening); classroom teaching (while listening); and learning after class (post listening) (Saricoban, 1999 as quoted by Nadjah, 2013).

The teacher can lead towards new learning materials in which all the four skills are merged together. For example, the teacher can start the lesson with a pre-discussion, then leads to a vocabulary development exercise, and then introduce the listening task, next the teacher can give a gap filling exercise, later the students and teacher can discuss the answers, and finally the task can finish with a writing exercise. The teacher must enrich the content of

the class. “If the teacher does not pay attention to the type of material he or she is going to bring to the language lab session, the use of the language lab and its effectiveness in helping students acquire L2 would be greatly diminished.” (Navas, 2013) Teachers’ sound decisions are very important. As Nadjah (2013) quoted what Dwyer (2010) stated: Lessons in the laboratory must be planned in such a way that the overall objective of the lesson is to bring about a transfer of any mechanical skill taught in the laboratory to a functional context reflecting the way the student has to use that skill outside the classroom in real life. Teachers need to adopt and update their knowledge according to the contemporary technologies. They should not panic if the machines go out of work. They need to be very comfortable with the modern technology so as with their traditional teaching. When used properly, labs can greatly increase the effectiveness of good teachers, whether or not they are native speakers of the target language (Lado, as quoted by Navas, 2013).

The length of the language lab can develop to exceed two hours. Actually, the lab should be more flexible where the students do not need a teacher all the time. The students can give chances to do self-learning during their free periods.

The students may have brilliant ideas in certain discussions. Their ideas should not neglect simply because the software and computers play a major role inside the lab. Language labs require better-prepared teachers who can put the new equipment and techniques to good use as well as conduct the class.

It is suggested that the balanced mix of the language lab and the classroom will do a great job. Most probably, language appears best in doing listening and speaking whereas the traditional classroom is best in reading and writing. We need not to be the savages of the modern technology, but we need to be the harbingers of change. Thus, a balanced approach will sound more. In other words, the study of new content and communicative activities may be conducted during the regular class period; then, specific areas such as pronunciation (the segmental and supra-segmental features of language), listening comprehension tasks, or further grammar practice must be reinforced in the lab with recorded material especially designed for language lab sessions. Navas (2013). To make the classroom more interesting teachers can bring strategies like adopting literature into the language classroom. It will be a sound approach to enhance reading skills of the students. This can be a challenge for the language teacher as it needs the essential theories and tactics but students will surely find it interesting as literature address their feelings, emotions, personal issues and has the capacity make students understand what is life (Pace, 2017).

Some students do not like the term itself 'English Language Lab'. Nevertheless, new terms like 'language media center' or 'learning resource center' can replace the term 'language lab' (Scinicariello, 1997 quote by Mohammed, 2016). Such new terms will work better inside the university.

Therefore, mere computers will not make the learning and teaching process more effective. It should be a combination of technology, students, teachers, and traditional teaching.

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