

An Analysis of *Kuppi* as a Learner Centered Strategy to Teach English as a Second Language in Sri Lankan Universities

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Abstract

Kuppi, popularly so-called by Sri Lankan university undergraduates in general is defined as a Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) strategy that is carried out by the students themselves prior to written evaluations. This qualitative study examined the feasibility of implementing *Kuppi* as a learner centered method to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) in Sri Lankan universities. The study incorporated a questionnaire with open-ended questions which was administered to elicit the research informants' in-depth responses. The questionnaire was administered among teachers and students who have participated in *Kuppi* sessions to teach/learn English or any other subject in Sri Lankan universities. The qualitative data gathered through the questionnaire were thematically analyzed incorporating Stephen Krashen's Theory of Affective Filter Hypothesis which argues that learning best takes place when students are inculcated with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, a low level of anxiety and extroversion. The study identified *Kuppi* as an effective learning strategy that has been in practice over the years within the university subculture. *Kuppi* can be successfully translated to a learner centered strategy to teach English as a Second Language in Sri Lankan universities by deconstructing power hierarchies that delineates learning to be accomplished with a sense of pleasure under extremely pressurized conditions. Furthermore, the findings of the questionnaire argued for the need of the incorporation of *Kuppi* as an institutionally recognized pedagogical method in teaching English as a Second Language in the university education system under the auspices of the academic staff, in a systematic way, meeting the expected teaching and learning standard of evaluation. Based on the theoretical perspectives on English Language Acquisition, the researchers recommend to implement a Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) method that encourages the interaction among the students and the tutors. Thus, the effectiveness of *Kuppi* as a learner centered strategy can be enhanced by institutionalizing it as an officially recognized pedagogical activity within the university ESL curricula.

Keywords: *Kuppi*; ESL; collaborative learning; learning strategy; communicative competence

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