



Effect of the Eclectic Approach of Teaching on English communication skills at Elementary Level

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to see the comparative effect of the Eclectic Approach of teaching on English communication skills— listening, speaking, reading and writing at Elementary Level. The objectives of the study were: to see the effect of Eclectic Approach on listening skill; to investigate the effect of the eclectic approach on speaking skill; to delve into the effect of the eclectic approach on reading skill; and to look into the effect of the Eclectic Approach on writing skill. Fifty six male students studying English in 8th class at Govt. High School Mian Banda, Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan were taken as a sample. The study was conducted through pre-test post-test equivalent design. Pair random sampling technique was used to form two groups — experimental and control. Both the groups were taught English grammar contents, specified in the National curriculum for 8th class. The experimental group was taught through the Eclectic Approach while the control group was left to its routine treatment. The experiment lasted for six weeks. Fourteen lesson plans were taught to both groups. Teacher-made pre-test and post-test were used to collect the data. In order to analyze the data, paired t-test was used. From the findings of the study, it was concluded that students who received experimental treatment outscored the ones who received routine treatment. Thus, it is recommended that the policy makers and curriculum planners should implement the Eclectic Approach for teaching English communication skills at all levels of education.

1. Introduction

English, because of its international character, caliber, richness, dominancy and currency, has secured a dominant position as a medium of instructions at public and private institutions in Pakistan. English is an international language today. It is the language of science, commerce, diplomacy, aviation, tourism, computing and publications (Bibi, 2002, 1-3).

Language is an integrated and interconnected whole and the teaching and learning of English needs a holistic, pluralistic and comprehensive teaching approach. The parts of language (listening, speaking, reading, writing, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar etc.) cannot be isolated and disintegrated. They are inseparably integrated with one another (Ellis, 2002, 223-236). This point has been substantiated by Rahman (2002) who points out that the language skills are naturally integrated. Learning and practicing one skill leads to the

learning, enhancing and mastering of the other skills. When a student is listening, an opportunity for writing is gradually developed. Likewise, when a learner is reading, an opportunity for speaking is gradually developed. Both develop and support each other in the development of language proficiency and without either oral communication remains meaningless. Similarly, grammar and vocabulary and grammar and communications skills are interrelated. According to Hornby (2000), the study of the language is basically the study of the grammar of that language. Vocabulary and grammar are interconnected and should be taught as an integrated whole. Vocabulary is built through grammar rules, for example, affixation, conversion, clipping and syllabification. Words are put into order according to grammar rules to change them into meaningful utterances, expressions and sentences. The importance of vocabulary learning has also been emphasized by Subon (2015, 284-291) who argues that vocabulary learning is central to building and enhancing communication skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Different teaching methods are used for teaching English. For example, the traditional approaches, such as the Grammar Translation Method which focuses on accuracy at the expense of the communicative competence of the learner. Contrarily, the Communicative Approach focuses on fluency at the expense of grammar rules and drills. Nevertheless, to remedy the imperfections of these approaches and to benefit from their strengths, there is need for a holistic, pluralistic and comprehensive approach (Eclectic Approach). A single teaching method or technique to teaching communication skills is not practical and effective because the needs and problems of the learners have multiplied. Instead, in order to meet the various needs of the learners and to make them rich and fluent in communication skills, a rich diet and multifaceted approach is needed (Brown, 2000).

According to Larsen-Freeman (2004), Eclectic Approach is a pluralistic, inclusive, all-encompassing and comprehensive approach of teaching in which the best techniques and bits of pieces from different teaching methods are systematically and logically combined and used eclectically in order to meet the varied, diversified and distinct needs of the learners. It is a bunch of multicolor and fresh flowers which focuses on the aims of the lesson and the learner's abilities. It creates fun in the class and kills boredom. It is a teaching approach which does not rely only on one model or norm. Instead, it connects different techniques and theories and finds local solutions to local problems. It penetrates deep into the subject and comes up with different theories for different cases (Aslam, 2003, 91).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The study aimed at delving into the effect of the Eclectic Approach of teaching on English communication skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing at Elementary Level in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

1.2 Objectives

This study had the following objectives:

- i. To see the effect of the Eclectic Approach on listening skill
- ii. To investigate the effect of the Eclectic Approach on speaking skill
- iii. To delve into the effect of the Eclectic Approach on reading skill
- iv. To look into the effect of the Eclectic Approach on writing skill

1.3 Research Hypothesis

The above-mentioned objectives were tested through the following null hypotheses:

H01 There is no significant effect of Eclectic Approach on listening.

H02 There is no significant effect of Eclectic Approach on speaking.

H03 There is no significant effect of Eclectic Approach on reading.

H04 There is no significant effect on Eclectic Approach on writing.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This experimental study may be helpful to the teachers in a sense that they can use the Eclectic Approach of teaching to build and enhance the communication skills and academic performance of the learners. Besides, it may enrich the literature on the Eclectic Approach and will motivate other researchers to conduct more researches at various levels.

2. Literature Review

Communication means to enable listeners and readers to understand a message. Communication is exchange of ideas between people either orally or in writing. It is an exchange of meaning and understanding. In everyday life, people communicate opinions and emotions to inform listeners and readers, to entertain, interest, amuse or mislead. There are mainly two types of communication. The first one is a one-way communication, such as radio broadcast, where the audience is a listener with no opportunity to respond. The second one is a two-way communication in which the speaker and listener interact with each other and have face to face conversation. Communication is a mutual interaction between two or more individuals who share knowledge or information with the language being used. Communication relies on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Tongboonyoun, 2013).

The learning, enhancing and mastering of the communication skills need a well-coherent lesson plan, activity based and authentic classroom, and a student-centered teaching approach. Effective communication cannot be acquired by only reading or teaching. The classroom activities need to be planned, strategized, practiced and assessed preferably in an authentic setting (Chan, 2011, 71-79). To achieve the goals of the lesson, a number of researchers support the adoption of the Eclectic Approach of teaching for teaching communication skills. Disvar and Tahir (2009) have proved in their experimental study that students who were taught through the Eclectic Approach showed better performances in their communication skills than those who were exposed to the treatment of other teaching methods.

Mehmmod (2012, 12) revealed in his study that if the students are provided interactive, comfortable and motivating environment, they can enhance their academic performance and feel joy in learning.

Kim and Kim (2005, 69-90) are of the view that the Eclectic Approach provides learners with the opportunities to developing their individual creativity as well as helping them understand the features of the target grammar.

2.1 Teaching Techniques

The following are the main techniques used in the Eclectic Approach.

WARM-UP OR MOTIVATION

Jun (2000) says “motivation is the basic principle of all kinds of teaching”. Practically speaking, the success of the class depends on the fact that how well the students are warmed up and motivated in the beginning of the class. A good hook activity in the beginning can establish a mental set, captivate the students, arouse their interest, enable them to do their own things and improve their listing, speaking and pronunciation skills.

PRESENTATION

Traditionally, the grammar is taught explicitly or implicitly. In explicit presentation, the teacher overtly explains the target grammar (rules and patterns) using grammatical terminology. In contrast, in the implicit

presentation, the teacher begins with an example that embeds the target grammar and delays the explicit explanation of the target grammar. However, as we know that students have a wide range of backgrounds and goals. Therefore, a purely explicit or implicit presentation may not meet most of their needs. So, the best way is to use a “hybrid” presentation which introduces grammar implicitly, in a meaningful context, and also introduces explicit explanation of the target grammar (Savage et. al, 2010, 1-39)

2.2 Peer-Tutoring

In peer tutoring, one student teaches the other. Peer tutoring is a teaching process in which the tutor and the tutee both are of the same age, grade and academic status. It benefits both the tutor and the tutee. It helps the tutee to understand the target grammar well and to get to higher academic goals. It helps the tutor because teaching something to someone else is the best way to learn something (Rizve, 2012, 99-119).

2.3 Mother-Tongue Equivalence

In order to make the input comprehensible, the judicious, timely, well-executed and appropriate use of mother tongue is necessary. Besides, in order to understand the target grammar and vocabulary well; to ensure fluency; to reduce anxiety and frustration; to help the shy, weak and less proficient students; to understand the task and activity well; to develop independent learning and self-confidence and to provide a “scaffold” between the students, mother tongue equivalence technique is very useful and creative (Koucka, 2007, 17-20).

2.4 Repeat-After-Me

The teaching technique ‘repeat-after-me’ is very effective for pronunciation correction, vocabulary acquisition and retention, enhancing reading and listening skills, improving rote learning and helping in second language learning. It also helps “students with learning disabilities” (Wahlheim, et.al, 2012, 1-4)

2.5 Gestures and Mimes

They help both the teacher and students in communicating, understanding and participating during class lessons and class activities; useful for class instructions especially in noisy settings; help to teach pronunciation; create fun in the class and used as a gaming activity (Wickom, 2012, 1-19).

2.5 Games

Games have a great educative value. Games are used to develop students’ interest; reduces anxiety; provide comfortable learning environment; enhances understanding of the target grammar, intelligence and retention; provide a context for meaningful communication; create fun in the class and motivate the shy and less proficient students to participate in class activities (Kimhachandra, 2010, 24-26).

2.6 Error Correction

Corrective feedback plays a significant role in forming error-free communication and getting rid of the error habit formation. It may be oral or written. For oral error correction, a variety of strategies, such as Recast, Explicit correction, Repetition of error, Elicitation, Meta-linguistic feedback, Clarification request, Denial, Peer correction, Ignoring and Self-correction are used. Besides, in the interactive classroom, the teacher circulates and notes down the errors and corrects them when the activity ends. Last, peer editing is also very productive strategy for error correction (Al-Faki & Siddick, 2013).

3. Method And Procedure

This study was experimental in nature and pre-test and post-test equivalent group design was adopted for the study. The adoption of this design helped in overcoming the threats to the treatment process.

3.1 Population of the Study

All students (547,623) at elementary level of 8th grade of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were the population of the

study (EMIS, 2015).

3.2 Sample of the Study

Fifty six (56) male students were taken as a sample of the study from Government High School Mian Banda, Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The sample was further bifurcated into experimental and control groups by using the technique of pair random sampling on pre-test score.

3.3 Research Instruments

Pre-test and post-test were used as research instruments. Content validity of the instruments was ensured through making a chart of specification, consultation with class teacher and critical guidance of the supervisor. Test retest technique was used to determine the reliability of the pre-test and post-test. For this purpose, fifty six students of 8th class, not included in the experiment, were given a test to get the reliability scores. The reliability coefficient was 0.99. Total time for the pre-test and post-test was 1 hour and total marks were 75.

3.4 Procedure of the Study

- i. The students were given a pre-test and on the basis of its results two groups were formed using pair random sampling technique.
- ii. Both the groups were taught English grammar contents specified in the National Curriculum for 8th class. Lesson plans were developed by the researcher for the experimental group on the basis of the principles of the Eclectic Approach. Fourteen lesson plans were taught to both the groups. The experiment lasted for six weeks.
- iii. When the experiment was over, the students took post-test.

3.5 Collection of Data

Pre-test was administered to the sample and the data obtained from the pre-test was manipulated to form two equivalent groups i.e. experimental and control by used pair random sampling technique. The experimental group was instructed through Eclectic Approach, while the control group was exposed to routine teaching process. The experiment lasted for six weeks. When the treatment ended, post-test was conducted for measuring the effectiveness of the Eclectic Approach.

3.6 Analysis of Data

First, mean scores were calculated. Then, paired t-test was used to see significant difference between the means scores of the two groups. The p value for testing the null hypotheses of the study was at 0.05.

4. Results

Table 1: Effect of Eclectic Approach on listening skill on post-test.

| Groups | N | df | Mean | S.D | SE _D | t-value |
|--------------|----|----|------|------|-----------------|---------|
| Experimental | 28 | 54 | 5.18 | 0.76 | 0.68 | 2.18 |
| Control | 28 | | 3.68 | 1.34 | | |

Table 1 expresses that there were 28 students in each group. The mean scores of the experimental and control groups were 5.18 and 3.68 respectively which shows that there was a significant effect of the Eclectic Approach on the listening skill of the experimental group. The standard deviation scores of the experimental and control groups were 0.76 and 1.34 respectively. The standard deviation values authenticate that experimental group showed less variation and better results than control group. The obtained t value is 2.18 and t table value was 2.015 which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Table 2: Effect of Eclectic Approach on peaking on post-test.

| Groups | N | df | Mean | S.D | SE _D | t-value |
|--------------|----|----|------|------|-----------------|---------|
| Experimental | 28 | | 3.43 | 0.94 | | |
| | | 54 | | | 0.36 | 2.46 |
| Control | 28 | | 2.57 | 1.15 | | |

Table 2 shows that there were 28 students in each group. The mean scores of the experimental and control groups were 3.43 and 2.57 respectively. The standard deviation scores of the experimental and control groups were 0.94 and 1.15 respectively. The obtained t value was 2.46 and t table value was 2.015 which shows that there was a significant difference between the two mean scores on post-test in speaking which led to the rejection of null hypothesis. The significant difference between the mean values in speaking skill is because of the effectiveness of the Eclectic Approach.

Table 3: Effect of Eclectic Approach on reading on post-test.

| Groups | N | df | Mean | S.D | SE _D | t-value |
|--------------|----|----|------|------|-----------------|---------|
| Experimental | 28 | | 3.75 | 0.90 | | |
| | | 54 | | | 0.37 | 2.17 |
| Control | 28 | | 2.93 | 1.14 | | |

According to table 3, there were 28 students in each group. The mean scores of the experimental and control groups were 3.75 and 2.93 respectively which revealed significant difference. The standard deviation scores of the experimental and control groups were 0.90 and 1.14 respectively. The obtained t value was 2.17 and t table value was 2.015 which resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis. The experimental group outscored the control group in reading skill.

Table 4: Effect of Eclectic Approach on writing on post-test.

| Groups | N | df | Mean | S.D | SE _D | t-value |
|--------------|----|----|------|------|-----------------|---------|
| Experimental | 28 | | 3.95 | 2.18 | | |
| | | 54 | | | 0.76 | 3.84 |
| Control | 28 | | 1.00 | 1.91 | | |

According to table 4, there were 28 students in each group. The mean scores of the experimental and control groups were 3.95 and 1.00 respectively which explained significant difference. The standard deviation scores of the experimental and control groups were 2.18 and 1.91 respectively. The obtained t value was 3.84 and t table value was 2.015 which led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The experimental group outscored the control group in writing skill because of the effectiveness of the Eclectic Approach.

5. Discussion

The pre-test scores proved that both experimental and control groups demonstrated same competence level in their communication skills. The experimental group was provided the treatment of Eclectic Approach while the control group was left to its routine treatment. The treatment period was six weeks. When the treatment period ended, post-test was conducted to both the groups. The obtained data were analyzed by using paired t-test of inferential statistics. The level of significance was 0.05 for all statistics and the obtained results have

been interpreted below.

H01: The null hypothesis was rejected on the basis of t-value $2.18 > 2.015$ (table value) which shows that Eclectic Approach has significant effect on the listening skill of the students. The results of the present study are consistent with those arrived at by Sultana (2014, 45-48) who reported that the students taught through the Eclectic Approach outscored their counterparts in listening skill.

H02: The null hypothesis was rejected on the basis of t-value $2.46 > 2.015$ (table value). This result shows that students taught through the Eclectic Approach outscored the control group in speaking skill. Almost similar findings have also been reported by Hussain (2005, 76-94) and Ubeid (2013) who argue that students taught through the Eclectic Approach showed better results in speaking skill compared to control group.

H03: The null hypothesis was rejected on the basis t-value $2.17 > 2.015$ (t table value). The results of the study authenticate the findings of the study conducted by Chen (2012) and Katmeba and Hulu (2013) which proved that students who were provided the treatment of the Eclectic Approach showed better results than the control group in reading skill.

H04: After the treatment, the mean score of experimental group was 3.95 which was higher than the control group mean which was 1.00. This difference was attributed to the effect of the Eclectic Approach and t-value $3.84 > 2.015$ (t table value) caused the rejection of the null hypothesis. Similar finding were reported by Xiao-Yun, Zhi-Yang and Peixing (2007) who proved that Eclectic Approach was very effective on the learners' writing skills.

6. Conclusion

After applying statistics on the data, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The experimental group showed better results in listening skill than the control group on post-test.
2. Eclectic Approach was more effective than the traditional methods for teaching speaking skill.
3. The experimental group outperformed the control group in reading skill on post-test.
4. The experimental group outdid the control group in writing skill on post-test.
4. Recommendations
 1. The results of the Eclectic Approach showed that it can yield better results compared to the traditional approaches or methods. Therefore, it is recommended that the policy makers should consider the applicability of the Eclectic Approach at all levels of education.
 2. It was found that the teacher was not trained in the Eclectic Approach. The researcher provided extensive training to the teacher. So, in order to teach and apply the Eclectic Approach successfully, the teachers should be provided pre-service and in-service training in the Eclectic Approach.
 3. It was found that the classroom did not have teaching and learning materials, such as charts, toy tools, audio-video aids, flash cards and dictionaries. The researcher himself provided these materials. Thus, each school and college should be equipped with a language laboratory in order to provide teachers and students the opportunities and facilities to benefit from the Eclectic Approach.
 4. This study also proved that textbooks which are more communicative, more student-centered and more activity-based can enhance students' skills and communicative competence. So, it is recommended that English textbook writers and curriculum planners should develop English books and course contents which are based on the principles of the Eclectic Approach.
 5. This experimental study was conducted on male students at elementary level in the rural context. Nevertheless, looking at the encouraging results, it is recommended that more studies should be conducted on both male and female students at all levels and in various contexts of education.

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