

Significance and Learners' Perspective of the Eclectic Approach: A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract

The ability to communicate in English language in the present era is more intense as English is used as a major link language throughout the world. Over the years several teaching methods and approaches have evolved for the effective teaching of English language skills but as each of the method has its own merits and demerits, the use of an Eclectic approach has become relevant. The present study investigates on how to improve speaking skills of undergraduate learners by the development of vocabulary and pronunciation using an Experimental Method. The method is implemented among two groups of learners, the control group and experimental group. Among the two groups a pretest and a posttest were conducted and the results were analyzed quantitatively to compare and measure the effectiveness of the approach. After the implementation of the approach, a quantitative and qualitative analysis in the form of questionnaire and a focus group interview was conducted to understand learners' perspective of the approach utilized.

Keywords: Eclectic Approach, Speaking Skills, Qualitative Analysis, Quantitative Analysis

Introduction

In the current era English has truly become a global language, a language that has the capacity to link different parts of the world. The increasing demand for English language has made it an invaluable skill to acquire. English has come to influence all aspects of life like trade, tourism, education, medicine and so on. Due to its international status, English has

become a connecting language that enables the speakers to be part of the global community.

However, among the four skills of English language the mastery of speaking skills is the most difficult of all the skills. Zang as cited in Al Hosni, (2014) states that "Speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English" (p. 23). Richards (1990) also states that "the mastery of speaking skill in English is seen as a priority for many EFL learners across the world". Additionally, he elaborates that "learners consequently often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course based on how well they can communicate in the spoken form."

Though "language acquisition is a natural process that evolves rapidly within a first few months of a child's birth" (Joy) considering the relevance of English language, at each point in time different language teaching approaches have evolved with good theoretical background for the better advancement of teaching and learning. Each of the methods was significant to handle the situation at that period but at the same time each of the methods had its own drawback which led to the development of the next method. This is where Eclectic approach comes in to prominence. Eclectic approach has the flexibility to use a combination of different methods according to the objective of the lesson.

The present study investigates the significance of the Eclectic approach to improve speaking skills of undergraduate learners by the development of vocabulary and pronunciation using an Experimental Method. The method is implemented among two groups of learners, the control group and experimental group. Among the two groups a pretest and a posttest were conducted and the results were analyzed quantitatively to compare and measure the effectiveness of the approach. After the implementation of the approach, a quantitative and qualitative analysis in the form of questionnaire and a focus group interview was conducted to understand learners' perspective of the approach utilized.

Eclectic Approach

The meaning of the root word eclecticism means "elect" which means to pick up and choose. The principles, concepts and ideas from various schools of thought have been chosen, picked up and blended to make a complete philosophy. Eclectic approach does not hold on to a single method or technique, it draws from multiple perspectives. Gilliland, James and Bowman (1994) stated that "the justification for the eclectic approach lies in the weaknesses of the single approach because a single method has a narrow theoretical basis and has a delimited set of activities and is therefore inflexible".

Every method in teaching language is designed to enable learners to acquire a language and its importance cannot be overlooked. But in a class

with heterogenous students to cater to all the learners' teachers and course designers realized the importance of an integrated method. Thus, the relevance of the Eclectic approach came in to prominence.

Experimental phase

During the experimental phase of the present study the learners in the experimental group were treated with modules based on the Eclectic approach whereas the learners of the control group went through traditional methods. A pretest and posttest were conducted and the results were analyzed quantitatively. There was a total of 113 students out of which 70 students were in the control group and 43 students were in the experimental group. The intervention lasted for a period of 2 months where the classes were conducted twice a week where each class lasted for about 1.5 hours duration.

Pre test

Before commencing the treatment, the learners of both the experimental and controlled group underwent a pretest to confirm the level of the learners. Sample Z test is carried out to test the significance.

Table 1- The Mean, Standard Deviation and Z of the pretest

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p value</i>
Vocabulary	Control	70	9.50	4.68	-0.653	0.515
	Experimental	43	10.16	6.06		
Pronunciation	Control	70	6.91	1.96	-6.685	0.076
	Experimental	43	9.70	2.43		
Total	Control	70	16.43	5.23	-0.175	0.861
	Experimental	43	16.63	6.85		

The result of the pretest indicates that there isn't any prominent difference between control and experimental group scores for Pronunciation and Vocabulary as the p value is more than 0.05. Furthermore, the findings in the pretest are crucial as it will enable the researcher to attribute any progress in the experimental group after implementing Eclectic approach.

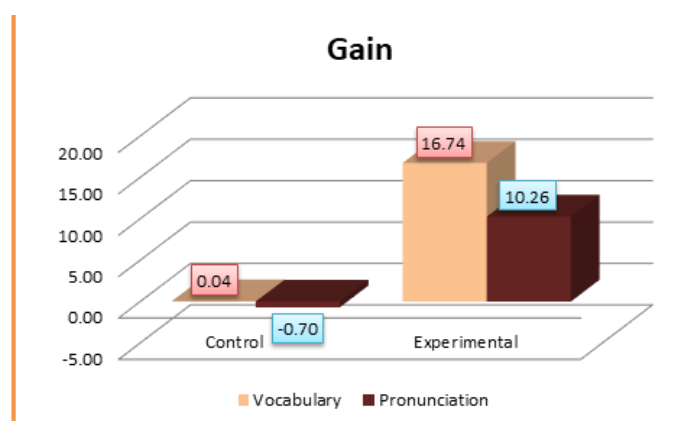
Post test

After the intervention a post test was conducted among both the groups to investigate any significance difference between the experimental and control group.

Table 2- The Mean, Standard Deviation and Z of the posttest

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p value</i>
Vocabulary	Control	70	9.54	4.23	-25.030	<0.001
	Experimental	43	26.91	2.12		
Pronunciation	Control	70	6.21	1.84	-36.731	<0.001
	Experimental	43	19.95	2.07		
Total	Control	70	15.81	4.81	-39.683	<0.001
	Experimental	43	46.86	2.24		

The result shows that significant difference exists between control and experimental group scores in the case of post-test for vocabulary and pronunciation as the p value in this case is less than 0.05. The significant differences in favour of the experimental group are attributed to the new teaching approach.

Bar graph 1- Comparison of the gain

The bar graph clearly indicates that the learners in both the experimental and control groups showed a prominent change. While comparing the mean scores of both the groups in the pretest and the posttest it is revealed that in the Experimental group Vocabulary exhibits M=10.16 and Pronunciation M=9.70 in the pretest whereas in the post test Vocabulary M=26.91 and Pronunciation M=19.95. In the controlled group for Vocabulary M=9.50 and Pronunciation M=6.91 in the pretest and during the post test for Vocabulary M=9.54 and Pronunciation M=6.21.

Learners' Perspective

After the implementation of the intervention based on the Eclectic approach, a questionnaire was used to gauge the learners' perspective after the implemented approach. The questionnaire was complemented with a focus group interview to further understand the learners' attitude and opinion of the approach.

Analysis of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed on a 5-point Likert scale containing Agree, strongly agree, neither agree or disagree, Disagree and Strongly disagree.

Reliability of the questionnaire

Before moving on to the analysis of the questionnaire, its reliability is tested. Cronbach's alpha is utilized to assess the reliability of the student's questionnaire. The table exhibits that the study could be taken for further analysis as the reliability is greater than 0.06.

Table 3-Reliability of attitude questionnaire

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
Eclectic Approach and the development of pronunciation and vocabulary	0.618	13
Students attitude towards the learning in EA	0.629	7

Mean, Standard deviation and z value for Students attitude towards the learning using Eclectic approach.

Table 4- The Mean, Standard Deviation and Z

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean % score	CV	z	p value
Students attitude towards the learning in EA	43	29.65	1.38	84.72	4.65	16.184	<0.001

The mean percentage score of level of Students attitude towards the learning using Eclectic approach. is 84.72% which indicate that level of Students attitude towards the learning using Eclectic approach. is excellent or high. The CV indicates that this score is stable as the value is less than 20%. To test whether the sample information that we observe exists in the population or to verify that the level of Students attitude towards the learning using Eclectic approach. is high or not, we formulate the hypothesis.

H_0 : The level of Students attitude towards the learning using Eclectic approach is equal to 75 percent of total score ($H_0: MPS=75\%$)

H_1 : The level of Students attitude towards the learning using the Eclectic approach is more than 75 percent of total score ($H_1: MPS>75\%$)

To test the above hypothesis, Z test is used, and the result is exhibited in Table 2a. From the table the p value is less than 0.05 and Z value is positive, which indicates that the test is significant. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the level of Students attitude towards

the learning using the Eclectic approach is more than 75% i.e., excellent or high.

Table 5-Learners Perspective of Eclectic Approach

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean % score	CV	z	p value	Level
1. EA enabled me to broaden my stock of vocabulary	43	4.14	0.64	82.79	15.44	3.996	<0.001	Excellent or high
2.EA helped me to learn many contextual vocabulary	43	4.00	0.22	80.00	5.46	7.512	<0.001	Excellent or high
3.I feel that right words come to me more naturally	43	3.84	0.53	76.74	13.85	1.076	0.288	Good or medium
4.I started to make a note of new words	43	3.56	1.05	71.16	29.61	-1.194	0.239	Good or medium
5.I started using the new words that I learn, into my speech	43	4.02	0.56	80.47	13.82	3.224	0.002	Excellent or high
6.EA helped me to improve my pronunciation	43	4.07	0.46	81.40	11.24	4.583	<0.001	Excellent or high
7.EA improved my vowel and consonant pronunciation	43	4.37	0.49	87.44	11.19	8.341	<0.001	Excellent or high
8.I started making a conscious effort to pronounce words correctly.	43	4.14	0.56	82.79	13.52	4.563	<0.001	Excellent or high
9.EA improved my speaking skills	43	4.28	0.67	85.58	15.57	5.206	<0.001	Excellent or high
10.The activities gave me opportunity to use English in different situations	43	4.07	0.51	81.40	12.45	4.137	<0.001	Excellent or high
11.From the group activities EA helped my turn talking skills	43	4.00	0.65	80.00	16.37	2.504	0.016	Excellent or high
12I am confident to initiate a conversation in English	43	3.72	0.70	74.42	18.84	-0.272	0.787	Good or medium
13.I no longer feel anxious at the	43	4.07	0.26	81.40	6.33	8.135 around 48.8%	<0.001	Excellent or high

thought of speaking in English						of learners agree to the statemt and		
14.EA approach was exciting and pleasurable	43	4.05	0.65	80.93	16.14	2.978	0.005	Excellent or high
15.I had a strong motivation to attend the classes	43	3.98	0.15	79.53	3.83	9.750	<0.001	Excellent or high
16.The classes were boring	43	4.91	0.29	98.14	5.99	25.814	<0.001	Excellent or high
17.I feel free to give my opinion on a topic	43	3.88	0.76	77.67	19.63	1.150	0.257	Good or medium
18.EA promoted teamwork	43	3.91	0.29	78.14	7.52	3.502	0.001	Excellent or high
19The activities provided were related to life, so was not bored.	43	4.07	0.40	81.40	9.88	5.215	<0.001	Excellent or high
20EA classes made me nervous	43	4.86	0.64	97.21	13.15	11.391	<0.001	Excellent or high

Discussion of the Results

The results of the data indicate that the learners who underwent Eclectic approach had a positive attitude towards the approach. The opinion of the learners is at par with the results exhibited in the post test. From the table above it can be inferred that the learners agreed about the significance of the approach in developing their oral capabilities. Additionally, the approach brought in them a sense of confidence, making them less anxious while initiating a conversation. Participants also revealed the learning to be much enjoyable and was highly motivated. Moreover, as the activities were related to life, they were more interesting.

Study of the focus interview findings

As the objective of the interview was to investigate the opinion and attitude of the learners towards the Eclectic approach in the experimental group which complements the quantitative study. The qualitative results reveal that the learners have a positive attitude about incorporating the Eclectic approach to improve the aspects of speaking skills. The approach has significantly improved the vocabulary and pronunciation of the learners, thereby enhancing the learners' speaking skills.

Not only have the learners expressed their positive attitude towards the approach, they have also opined about how the approach has inculcated

in them a sense of self learning which is a great change among the learners. They started making notes of new words and started including them as a part of their vocabulary. They became conscious about their pronunciation and of others. All this helps them to improve their speaking aspects which are reflected in their speaking.

Furthermore, the group activities improved the bonding among the group members which enabled smooth exercise of all the activities. Also, such activities provided the participants with speaking partners. In the normal scenario the participants lacked the opportunity to exercise speaking. The activities provided them with ample opportunities. Moreover, the approach boosted their confidence and took away their anxiety and fear of making mistakes and being judged upon was indicated during survey.

Moreover, the learners have recommended the approach to other learners as well as they indicated that speaking English has become a need of the hour and the approach will enable the learners to accomplish that. In addition, the approach was a new experience and a fun way to learn the aspects of speaking skills to improve their oral capabilities.

Conclusion

The experimental data collected during the speaking tests before and after the treatment clearly indicates a significant difference. The pretest showed no significant difference among the learners whereas the posttest indicated a great difference among the learners of the two groups. This outperformance by the learners in the experimental group can be attributed to the Eclectic approach. Through that quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data acquired through the questionnaire supported by the focus group interview, it clearly demonstrates a positive perspective of the learners towards the Eclectic approach. Students have indicated an improvement in pronunciation and development in their stock of vocabulary, thereby improving the quality of speaking skills and have even recommended using the approach to other learners. Moreover, the approach has made the learners more confident and less anxious to speak in English.

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