

Use of Eclectic Approach as the Medium of Transition: A Shift from Grammar Translation Method to Direct Method

Ihsan Ali

Email: ihsan1806882@gmail.com

Arshad Mehmood

Government High Secondary School Chotala (Jhelum). Email: coolncalm551@gmail.com

Madya Asgher (corresponding author)

University of Management and Technology Sialkot. Email: madya.asghar@skt.umt.edu.pk

Abstract

Despite the English language being taught as a compulsory subject from primary to graduate levels in Pakistan, ESL students in public and private institutions continue to struggle with competence. One of the basic reasons for this issue is the use of the conventional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). Unfortunately, it has remained entrenched due to a shortage of proficient English teachers, inconsistent educational policies by the government of Pakistan, and a non-standardized examination system. In this regard, the current study offers a solution to this challenging problem by advocating a shift from GTM to Direct Method (DM) with the help of the Eclectic Approach used as the medium of transformation. As the nature of the study is experimental female undergraduate students aged between 17 to 22 who are studying English as a compulsory subject at the intermediate level are the sample of this research. They are chosen purposefully according to the research requirement; 1) prior exposure to GTM and 2) with poor pretest scores. Moreover, Pretests and posttests are done using standardized IELTS exams. Later the data analysis is carried out using SPSS (2.1). The findings of the study indicate that the intervention of the Eclectic Approach yields a substantial improvement in post-test scores, supporting the hypothesis that it can facilitate the transition from GTM to DM significantly. Thus this study emphasizes the use of the Eclectic Approach in the Pakistani ESL context.

Keywords: Eclectic Approach, GTM (Grammar Translation Method), DM (Direct Method)

Background of the study

English as a second language in the context of Pakistan has a rich historical importance. Teaching of English as a second language started during the British colonial period. Those were the Britishers who introduced English as the medium of communication under their rule. Grammar Translation Method which was already prevailing in Europe for teaching Latin and Greek language also gained enough prestige in the sub-continent India. It focuses heavily on grammar rules, vocabulary memorization, and translation between the target language and the learner's native language. (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). However, it was abandoned inviting heavy criticism from a large number of language scholars. They have mentioned some critical reasons associated with it. Firstly, it predominantly concentrates on reading and translating written texts, undermining the development of oral and aural skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Secondly, it perpetuates rote memorization of grammatical rules and vocabulary, discouraging creative language use (Chakrabarty, 2017). Consequently, students may struggle to apply English practically in real-life contexts. Thirdly, it neglects exposing students to authentic language contexts and practical language use, impeding their ability to understand English in real-life scenarios (Kumar, 2013). Fourthly, it often fails to engage and inspire students due to its monotonous nature, which leads to reduced motivation and hinders learning outcomes (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

However, there are some underdeveloped countries like Pakistan where it still exists due to the lack of pedagogical reforms, resulting in students with limited communication skills. Its persistence in Pakistan's education system can be attributed to several issues within the Pakistani government policies. These issues include a lack of pedagogical reforms, examination-centric focus, inadequate teachers' training, insufficient investment in language learning resources, and the impact of sociopolitical and economic instability in Pakistan. According to the first reason, the post-1947 education policies in Pakistan have not prioritized pedagogical reforms, failing to modernize teaching methods and curriculum design (Naseer, 2019).

As far as the second reason is concerned, Pakistan's education system has disproportionately prioritized examinations, emphasizing rote learning and memorization. This practice encourages the GTM, as it aligns with exam objectives, promoting memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary for exam success (Ali, 2017). Further, one of the main reasons is the lack of proficient ESL teachers which corresponds to the improper and faulty criteria of their recruitment (Xinmin & Ali, 2018). Teachers in Pakistan often lack training in modern language teaching methods (Siddiqui, 2012). As many educators themselves were educated using the GTM, they continue to employ this method, perpetuating its flaws. Moreover, the government has not invested adequately in language learning resources, materials, and technology (Khan, 2015). Modern language teaching methods necessitate multimedia and interactive resources, which have often been absent.

In addition, political instability and socioeconomic challenges have frequently taken precedence over educational reform in Pakistan (Mumtaz, 2000). These external factors have hindered comprehensive changes in the education system, perpetuating the GTM's use. Consequently, the GTM remains the dominant approach in the country.

However, this is not the complete picture, there are several language teaching approaches that have been adopted on a limited scale in addition to the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). These include the Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

- Direct Method: The Direct Method emphasizes oral skills in everyday situations. It discourages the use of the learners' native language and relies on a natural approach to language learning.
- Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): CLT focuses on communication as the primary goal of language learning. It encourages interaction and real-life language use in the classroom.
- Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT): TBLT is centered on the completion of meaningful tasks, often in pairs or groups. This approach prioritizes language use for practical purposes.

While the Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) have their merits, unfortunately, they have not seen widespread success in the Pakistani context for several reasons: cultural and linguistic diversity, examination-centric education, lack of teachers training, limited resources and socioeconomic factors.

According to the first reason, Pakistan is a linguistically diverse country with numerous regional languages and dialects (Ali, 2017). This diversity poses challenges for language teaching. The Direct Method's reliance on spoken language and CLT's emphasis on real-life communication often overlook the linguistic diversity and needs of Pakistani learners (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). TBLT, while practical, may not always cater to the linguistic backgrounds of the students.

The second reason is that Pakistan's education system has historically been examination-driven, with a strong emphasis on memorization and grammar rules (Ali, 2017). The Direct Method's focus on oral skills and communication may not align with the examination-oriented system. CLT and TBLT require a significant shift in teaching and evaluation methods that the system hasn't fully embraced.

The third reason shows that implementing teaching methods like CLT and TBLT effectively requires well-trained teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Pakistan has faced challenges in providing comprehensive training to teachers, which hinders the adoption of these methods. The Direct Method, too, demands specialized training for teachers.

Further, CLT and TBLT often require extensive materials, technology, and resources (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). In many Pakistani educational settings, these resources are scarce. The Eclectic Approach, by combining methods and adapting to available resources, can be more practical in resource-constrained environments.

Moreover, economic disparities and accessibility to quality education are significant issues in Pakistan. These disparities may affect the implementation of teaching methods like CLT and TBLT, which may require a more level playing field in terms of resources and opportunities (Ali, 2017).

Consequently, Pakistan demands a new approach like the Elective Approach. It has been observed that introducing the elective approach to language teaching in Pakistan's education system can significantly address the aforementioned flaws. This approach offers several benefits:

- It can enhance the communication skills of the students: The elective approach places a stronger emphasis on developing practical language skills, including speaking and listening. It provides students with opportunities to engage in meaningful, real-life conversations, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in English (Siddiqui, 2012).
- Unlike the GTM, it can foster creativity and critical thinking. The elective approach encourages creative language use. It promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and the application of language in diverse contexts. Students can explore their creativity and express themselves more freely (Siddiqui, 2012).
- Further, it focuses on contextual Learning. The elective approach is inherently more context-driven. It exposes students to real-life language situations, enabling them to understand how English is used in practical scenarios. This approach aligns with the demands of English language usage in Pakistan's professional world (Kumar, 2013).
- Lastly, it increases the motivational level of the students. The elective approach incorporates student interests and choices, making the learning experience more engaging and motivational. Students can select language modules that align with their interests and

career aspirations, promoting a sense of ownership over their education (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Therefore, it can be assumed that the Eclectic Approach appears to be more apt for the Pakistani context. The Eclectic Approach combines elements of various methods, offering the flexibility to adapt teaching strategies to the diverse needs of Pakistani learners. Given the linguistic diversity in Pakistan and the various motivations for learning English, the Eclectic Approach's adaptability is particularly advantageous.

Research Questions

1. In what way does the use of the Eclectic Approach affect ESL learning of undergraduate female students (17-22 years) in Sialkot, Pakistan?
2. Which skill of the English language carries a strong effect with the use of the Eclectic Approach on undergraduate female students (17-22 years) in Sialkot, Pakistan?

Research Hypothesis

This research is based on the following hypotheses:

1. Undergraduate female students (17-22 years), taught through an Eclectic approach, demonstrate significant improvement in speaking skills.
2. Undergraduate female students (17-22 years), taught through an Eclectic approach, exhibit significant enhancement in listening skills.
3. Undergraduate female students (17-22 years), taught through an Eclectic approach, display substantial progress in writing skills.
4. Undergraduate female students (17-22 years), taught through an Eclectic approach, show notable advancement in their reading skills.

Methodology of the study

This study follows an experimental research design, with the sample consisting of female participants aged 17-22 who are pursuing undergraduate education at government colleges in Sialkot, Pakistan. A total of 50 participants were selected for pre-test and post-test assessments, using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was chosen based on the recommendation by Lomax (2022) for experimental designs like this one.

The participants were divided into two equal groups, with 25 participants in each group. One group served as the experimental group, while the other served as the control group. The pre-test was conducted using the IELTS Academic Skills format as a pilot test to evaluate the participants' initial language skills.

Both groups received instruction for a duration of one month, with two hours of instruction per day. The control group was taught using traditional language teaching methods, while the experimental group received instruction using the Eclectic approach.

Following the instructional period, a post-test was administered to both groups to evaluate the impact of the Eclectic approach. To analyze the data, statistical measures including Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test were employed to assess the impact of the Eclectic approach on the learning of all the ESL skills.

Data Interpretation

Hypothesis 1: Undergraduate female students (17-22 years), taught through an Eclectic approach, demonstrate significant improvement in speaking skills."

Table 1. Paired sample post-test achieved by the control and experimental group for the academic speaking skill test:

Groups	N	Df	Mean	S.D.	t-test	Sig(2-tailed)
Control group	25	49	9.00	4.08082	8.5228	0.000
Experimental Group	25	49	19.00	4.21470		

In support of Hypothesis 1, we analyzed the paired sample post-test results for the academic speaking skills between the control and experimental groups. The purpose was to determine whether female students of ESL in the age group of 17-22, when taught through an Eclectic approach, exhibited a noteworthy enhancement in their speaking skills.

The results present compelling evidence in favor of our hypothesis. The mean post-test score for the experimental group was 19.00, while that of the control group was 9.00 (see Table 1). This significant disparity of 10.00 points underscores the effectiveness of the Eclectic approach in fostering speaking skills.

The substantial difference in the mean scores indicates that the participants in the experimental group, who received instruction through the Eclectic approach, demonstrated a remarkable improvement in their speaking skills in comparison to those in the control group. This substantiates our hypothesis that the Eclectic approach positively influences the speaking skills of female ESL students aged 17-22.

Furthermore, the two-tailed t-test (8.5228) yielded a p-value = Sig of .000 (see Table 1), indicating a highly significant difference between the post-test results of the experimental group and the control group. This statistical significance underscores the validity of our findings and aligns with our hypothesis that the Eclectic approach leads to a substantial improvement in speaking skills.

Hypothesis 2: Undergraduate female students (17-22 years), taught through an Eclectic approach, exhibit significant enhancement in listening skills."

Table 2. Paired sample post-test achieved by the control and experimental group for listening skills:

Groups	N	Df	Mea n	S.D.	t-test	Sig(2-tailed)
Control group	25	49	3.3400	2.3201	2.13277	0.000
Experimental Group	25	49	5.1000	3.4120		

In support of Hypothesis 2, we conducted a paired sample post-test analysis to evaluate the listening skills of female students of ESL aged 17-22, who were taught using the Eclectic approach. The objective was to ascertain whether this teaching approach had a substantial impact on enhancing their listening skills.

The post-test results reveal a promising trend that aligns with our hypothesis. The mean post-test score for the experimental group, which received instruction through the Eclectic approach, was 5.1000. In comparison, the control group's mean score was 3.3400. This difference suggests that the participants instructed with the Eclectic approach displayed better listening skills, however, the difference is not very big.

The statistical analysis, conducted using SPSS, demonstrates that the value of the t-test for the experimental group is notably higher than that of the control group. This significant difference further substantiates our hypothesis, indicating that the Eclectic approach is associated with an enhancement in listening skills among the specified demographic of female ESL students aged 17-22.

The results of this analysis offer support for Hypothesis 2. Female students in the 17-22 age group, when taught through the Eclectic approach, exhibited a considerable improvement in their listening skills, as indicated by the variance in mean scores and the higher t-test value (2.13277). This reinforces the potential of the Eclectic approach as an effective pedagogical strategy for enhancing listening skills among ESL learners within the specified age range.

Hypothesis 3: Undergraduate female students (17-22 years), taught through an Eclectic approach, display substantial progress in writing skills."

Table 3. Paired sample post-test of the Experimental and Control group for writing skill.

Groups	N	Df	Mean	S.D.	t-test	Sig(2-tailed)
Control group	25	49	9.00	4.08082	3.4091	0.000
Experimental Group	25	49	13.00	4.21470		

In line with Hypothesis 3, our study aimed to investigate whether the application of the Eclectic approach had a noteworthy effect on the development of writing skills among female undergraduate language learners in the context of Pakistan.

The post-test results presented significant insights into the impact of the Eclectic approach on the writing skills of the participants. Notably, the mean post-test score for the control group was 9.00, while the mean score for the experimental group was 13.00 (see Table 3).

The value of the t-test, used to compare the two sets of mean scores, is of particular significance. It is 3.4091 (see Table 3). The experimental group's higher t-test value suggests that the Eclectic approach played a substantial role in fostering the development of writing skills among these female ESL students aged 17-22.

Furthermore, the values of the significant difference, denoted as $p=.000$, affirm that there exists a substantial disparity in the results between the control and experimental groups. This, in essence,

underscores the effectiveness of the Eclectic approach in facilitating an improvement in writing skills among the target demographic.

The data analysis provides robust support for Hypothesis 3. The findings indicate that female students aged 17-22 when instructed using the Eclectic approach, made substantial progress in their writing skills. The noticeable variance in mean scores and the higher t-test value for the experimental group emphasize the positive impact of this pedagogical approach. It suggests that the Eclectic approach holds promise as a valuable teaching strategy for advancing the writing skills of female ESL learners within the specified age group.

Hypothesis 4: Undergraduate female students (17-22 years), taught through an Eclectic approach, show notable advancement in the reading skills."

Hypothesis 4 sought to explore whether the application of the Eclectic approach had a discernible impact on the advancement of the reading skills among female students of ESL aged 17-22.

Table 4. Paired sample post-test of the control and experimental group for the reading skills

Groups	N	Df	Mean	S.D.	t-test	Sig(2-tailed)
Control group	25	49	7.2800	2.93712	8.8436	0.000
Experimental Group	25	49	15.3600	3.49889		

The findings from the pre-test results are pivotal to this hypothesis. They provide a basis for evaluating the initial reading skills of both the control and experimental groups. These values encompass the mean, standard deviation, and the significant difference in pre-test scores for both groups. Upon analysis, it was evident that the mean score for the experimental group was notably higher than that of the control group. The mean score for the experimental group was indicative of their achievement after being instructed via the Eclectic approach. Furthermore, the t-test was utilized to quantitatively assess the significance of the results. The t-test value is 8.8436 (see Table 4). This data implies that participants who were taught through the Eclectic approach significantly outperformed their peers who were instructed by different methods. The experimental group, in this case, excelled in the reading skills.

These findings align with the stipulations of Hypothesis 4. The Eclectic approach played a noteworthy role in advancing the reading skills of female ESL students aged 17-22. The statistically significant t-test value accentuates this progress, emphasizing the method's effectiveness. The data analysis underscores the positive impact of the Eclectic approach on reading skills, providing strong support for Hypothesis 4. This suggests that for female ESL students in the specified age group, this teaching approach has the potential to drive significant advancements in reading skills.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this research provide significant insights into the impact of using the Eclectic Approach to help students improving their English language skills. These findings are as follows:

1. **Positive Impact on Speaking Skills:** The first major finding indicates that the Eclectic approach had a positive effect on the speaking skills of the participants. The observed enhancement in speaking abilities is in concordance with the tenets of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritize oral interaction (Brown, 2000). It also resonates with the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which prioritizes spoken communication (Ur, 1996). The research findings affirm that the Eclectic approach is effective in enhancing students' speaking abilities.
2. **Enhanced Listening Skills:** The second finding highlights the positive impact of the Eclectic approach on listening skills. During the instruction, the students have the opportunity to listen to their teacher and classmates more which aligns with the principles of the Direct Method that focuses on oral skills and listening (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). The Eclectic approach's success in improving listening skills is particularly noteworthy, as listening is a fundamental aspect of language acquisition.
3. **Positive Influence on Writing Skills:** The third major finding demonstrates the effectiveness of the Eclectic approach in enhancing writing skills. It corroborates the efficacy of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in promoting practical language use (Willis, 1996). During the experiment, the students are encouraged to focus on real-world tasks and authentic writing activities which have empowered students to produce coherent and effective natural texts. The positive influence on writing skills suggests that the Eclectic approach encourages students to apply their language skills in practical contexts.
4. **Holistic Language Development:** The study's most compelling finding is the comprehensive development of all four language skills. This holistic approach aligns with the contemporary view of language as a complex system of interconnected abilities (Bachman & Palmer, 1990). By integrating elements from various methodologies, the eclectic approach has successfully cultivated well-rounded language learners.

Overall, the findings support the central objective of this research, highlighting the effectiveness of using the Eclectic approach as the medium of transition from the Grammar-Translation Method to the Direct Method. The results affirm the advantages of adopting modern language teaching methods, which cater to a broader set of language skills, as opposed to traditional approaches that may be more limited in scope.

Conclusion

As, the major findings of this research suggest that the Eclectic approach has a positive and significant impact on the development of ESL skills among female students at the undergraduate level in Sialkot, Pakistan. The approach is particularly effective in enhancing speaking, listening, and writing skills, contributing to a more comprehensive language skill development approach. Thus, the current study provides evidence for the efficacy of transitioning from the Grammar-Translation Method to the Direct Method with the use of the Eclectic Approach as the medium of Transition.

Future Recommendations

1. The research suggests that the Eclectic Approach is effective in developing comprehensive language skills. It is recommended that educational institutions in Pakistan consider adopting this approach more widely in ESL classrooms. This transition can significantly benefit students by improving their speaking, listening, writing, and reading abilities.
2. To successfully implement the Eclectic Approach, teacher training is crucial. Educators should receive training and professional development in modern language teaching methods, including the Eclectic Approach. This will enable them to effectively employ this method and help students achieve better language proficiency.

Continuous research is essential to evaluate the impact of the Eclectic Approach and other modern teaching methods. Further studies can help identify specific strategies and techniques within the Eclectic Approach that are most effective. This research can inform ongoing improvements in ESL education.

References

- Ali, S. (2017). A review of the English language teaching system in Pakistan. *South Asian Studies*, 32(2), 107-121.
- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1990). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford University Press.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Pearson Education.
- Chakrabarty, A. (2017). Direct method: A scientific approach to teaching a language. *The New Education Leader*, 3(2), 81-82.
- Khan, A. I. (2015). English language education in Pakistan: A historical perspective. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 5(4), 61-66.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding Language Teaching: From Method to Postmethod*. Routledge.
- Kumar, R. (2013). The eclectic approach to language teaching: A progressive outlook in the Indian context. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*, 1(4), 32-39.
- Lomax, K. E. M. (2022). *Effect of Critical Thinking Skills Instruction on Preservice Teachers' Self-Efficacy Levels* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of West Florida).
- Mumtaz, S. (2000). Education policies and strategies in Pakistan: A historical analysis. *Comparative Education*, 36(4), 411-429.
- Naseer, S. (2019). Critical analysis of educational policies of Pakistan. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 10(2), 13-21.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Siddiqui, I. (2012). English language teacher education in Pakistan: An overview. *Language Testing in Asia*, 2(2), 101-108.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Longman.
- Xinmin, Z., & Ali, I. (2018). An Empirical Research: The Use of International English Testing System as a Tool to Assess the English Language Teachers' Language Proficiency.