

# INTEGRATION OF THE ECLECTIC APPROACH: OPINION AND ATTITUDE OF THE LEARNERS TOWARDS THE APPROACH IN DEVELOPING PRONUNCIATION AND VOCABULARY TO ENHANCE SPEAKING SKILLS.

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## Abstract

With the growing demand for English language skills in the current era, several approaches and methods have evolved to equip the learners with appropriate English language skills. However, with difficulties in achieving the aims and objectives of a course by relying on just a single method, the Eclectic approach came into prominence. An eclectic approach is simply moving away from a single method and using different methods depending on the objective of the lesson and the ability of the learners. In a class with heterogenous students to cater to the needs of all the learners' teachers and course designers realized the importance of an integrated method. In the present study the researcher intends to explore learners' attitude and opinion of the Eclectic approach to improve vocabulary and pronunciation to enhance speaking skills of undergraduate learners. The study comprises of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data which is obtained through research instruments such as questionnaire and focus interview.

**Key words:** Opinion and attitude, Eclectic approach, speaking skills, undergraduate learners, vocabulary, pronunciation

## Introduction

In the current era English has become more of a life skill than a tool for communication. English language has become that liberating force that equip the learners to be a part of the competitive job markets, access information, get access to global education and global market. As rightly quoted "a learners' ability to speak well enables him to articulate his thinking about a subject matter and convey meaning to his listeners. (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Being able to communicate in English effectively broadens the scope to relate to people around the world. 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).

Among the aspects of speaking, though vocabulary plays a very crucial role, it has not been receiving enough attention from the beginning. But recently vocabulary has been a major focus of study, realizing its importance. It not only improves the production and comprehension of a language, but it also stands as a good indicator of the acquisition and improvement of language learning. Another aspect of speaking is pronunciation. Speaking is an activity that involves sounds in the vocal cord. Being able to produce accurate sounds is imperative for effective and intelligible oral communication.

The present study is conducted to investigate learners' attitude and opinion about the effectiveness of the Eclectic approach to improve vocabulary and pronunciation among undergraduate learners

in Kerala. The study comprises both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data which is obtained through research instruments such as questionnaires and interviews.

### **Eclectic Approach**

Over the years many language teaching methods and approaches have evolved for effective teaching of English language. Every method in teaching language is designed to enable learners to acquire 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 use of the Eclectic approach came into prominence. This approach combines the principles of various methods and approaches of teaching a language depending on the lesson objectives and individual differences of students (Iscan, 2017 ) The approach also highlights the importance of the integration of different skills of language. Logically, the right blending of the different approaches can be effective as the learners need to learn a variety of skills. Thus, the combining of the best features can bring in optimal results.

In the current research a treatment based on Eclectic approach was given to 43 undergraduate learners to improve the learners' pronunciation and vocabulary to enhance their speaking skills. The treatment lasted for around two months with classes conducted twice a week of 1.5 hours duration. The analysis of the data after the treatment indicated significant progress in the learners' oral capabilities. Furthermore, to explore learners' attitude and opinion a questionnaire was given to the learners. To complement the findings of the data, a focus interview was conducted among the learners to get a better understanding of their perspective and opinion about the treatment that was conducted based on the Eclectic approach.

### **Description 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. The questionnaire was implemented after the treatment was done in the experimental group to observe and evaluate the attitude and opinion of the learners regarding the treatment that was done. The questionnaire has two sections. The first section explores the Eclectic Approach and the development of pronunciation and vocabulary. And the second section is to investigate students' attitude towards the learning in Eclectic approach.

### **Data**

### **Analysis**

Section 1: Eclectic Approach and the development of pronunciation and vocabulary. To find level of learners' opinion about Eclectic Approach in the development of pronunciation and vocabulary, the respondents are asked 13 questions on five-point Likert scale.

[ $MPS = \text{Mean Score} \times 100 / \text{Maximum possible score}$ ]

The obtained score is grouped into one of the groups which is group from poor which is less than 35% to excellent which is above 75%. To test the significance sample Z test is used. The following table gives the required calculations. (R. R. etal 1985, p169).

**Table 1 Mean, Standard deviation and z value for Student’s opinion on Eclectic Approach and the development of pronunciation and vocabulary**

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean % score	CV	z	p value
Student’s opinion on Eclectic Approach and the development of pronunciation and vocabulary	43	52.28	2.97	80.43	5.68	7.790	<0.001

The table exhibits that the extend of the learners' opinion about the Eclectic approach towards the development of oral capabilities of the learners is 80.43% which is excellent. To further verify the following hypothesis has been formulated

H<sub>0</sub>: The level of learners' opinion about their Eclectic Approach and the development of pronunciation and vocabulary is equal to 75 percent of total score (H<sub>0</sub>: MPS=75%)

H<sub>1</sub>: The level of learners' opinion about their Eclectic Approach and the development of pronunciation and vocabulary is more than 75 percent of total score (H<sub>1</sub>: MPS>75%)

To analyse the hypothesis sample Z test is used and the result is exhibited in Table 1a. The results indicate that the test is significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that the level of learners' opinion about their Eclectic Approach and the development of pronunciation and vocabulary is more than 75% i.e., excellent or high.

**Table 1a The scores and z value for Student’s opinion on Eclectic Approach and the development of pronunciation and vocabulary**

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 thought of speaking in English	43	4.07	0.26	81.40	6.33	8.135a round 48.8% of learner s agree to the statem t and	<0.001	Excellent or high
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The results reveal that a significant number of students expressed a positive attitude towards the effectiveness of the Eclectic approach in developing their speaking skills. In item 9 around 48.8% of learners agree with the statement, 39.5% strongly agree and around 11.6% of the participant has taken a neutral stand.

In the questionnaire, item 1-6 was about the development of vocabulary. Item 1 revealed that around 76.7% of learners agree and 20.9% strongly agree to the fact that the Eclectic approach has widened the stock of learners' vocabulary and almost 93% of learners agree and 2% strongly agree that the Eclectic approach enabled the learners to learn many contextual words as revealed in item 2. It is indicated in item 3, that around 88.4% of learners agree and 9.3% strongly agree that appropriate words come into speech of the learner more naturally. Also, the learner also started making notes of new words as revealed in item 4. Around 83.7% agree with this statement, 2% have taken a neutral stand and 14% have disagreed with this. Item 5 points out that around 88% of learners agree and 9% strongly agree that they have started including the newly learned words into their speech.

In terms of the improvement of pronunciation using the approach, item 7 reveals that 79% agrees and 14% strongly agree with the statement. Around 63% agree and 37% strongly agree that the approach has enabled them to improve their vowel and consonant pronunciation. Also 67% of the learners has agree and 23% strongly agree that they have started making conscious effort to improve their pronunciation as signified in item 9.

Item 11 indicates that the activities included in the approach gave them opportunity to use the language in different situations. 74% agree to this and 16% strongly agree to the statement. Also, around 76.7% agree and 14% strongly agree that the activities enabled them to improve turn talking skills. And item 13 reveals that 81.4% agrees and 14% has taken a neutral stand and 4.7% disagrees that the approach has made them confident to initiate a conversation.

All the above statistics imply that the approach has brought among the learners a positive attitude towards the development of vocabulary and pronunciation, thereby improving their speaking skills.

## Section2- Students attitude towards the learning in Eclectic approach

To find the level of Students attitude towards the learning using Eclectic approach., the respondents are asked 7 questions on five-point Likert scale. The total score of the 7 questions

for all 43 respondents is found out, based on which the mean % score of level of Students attitude towards the learning using Eclectic approach is calculated.

$$[MPS = \text{Mean Score} \times 100 / \text{Maximum possible score}]$$

This score is classified into one of the four groups.

**Table 2** The scores and z value for Students attitude towards the learning using Eclectic approach.

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 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. For further analysis the following hypothesis is formulated.

H<sub>0</sub>: The extend of Students attitude towards the learning using Eclectic approach is equal to 75 percent of total score (H<sub>0</sub>: MPS=75%)

H<sub>1</sub>: The extend of Students attitude towards the learning using the Eclectic approach is more than 75 percent of total score (H<sub>1</sub>: MPS>75%)

From the results below, the null hypothesis is rejected 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 2a** Scores and z value for Students attitude towards the learning in EA

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean % score	CV	z	p value	Level
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

The above statistics clearly indicate learners found the approach to be exciting and pleasurable. Around 76.7 students agreed, and 16.3% of students strongly agreed with the statement whereas around 2% disagreed with the statement. In item 15 almost 98% of learners agreed that they had a strong motivation to attend the classes. When asked if the classes were boring 90.7% disagreed and 9.3% strongly disagreed the statement. Furthermore, learners were asked if they were free to give their opinions. Almost 79% agreed, 9% strongly agreed, whereas 4.7% strongly disagreed. In item 18 students were asked if the learning in Eclectic approach promoted teamwork 90.7% agreed whereas 9.3% took a neutral stand. Students were further asked in item 19 if their activities were related to life which prevented them from getting bored 83.7% agreed, 11.6% strongly disagreed and 4.7% took a neutral stand. Finally in item 20, when learners had to react to the statement that the Eclectic approach made the learners nervous, 95.3% disagreed and 4.7% agreed.

### Discussion of the results

The results obtained from the analysis of data indicated that almost all the participants have a positive attitude towards the integration of the Eclectic approach to improve vocabulary and pronunciation. The results reveal the effectiveness of the Eclectic approach to improve speaking skills of the learners.

Section 1 is learners' opinion about the use of Eclectic approach in the development of vocabulary and pronunciation to enhance their speaking skills. And section 1 reveals a positive attitude towards the approach. It was also indicated that most of the participants agreed about the effectiveness of the approach in developing vocabulary and pronunciation. Furthermore, the learners indicate that the approach inculcated in them to make use of new vocabulary and used the newly learned words, the learners also started to make conscious effort to improve their pronunciation. In addition, the data from the learners reflect that they started becoming less anxious and more confident in initiating conversations.

As far as the learning using the Eclectic approach is concerned in section 2, almost all the participants agreed that the learning was exciting and pleasurable, and the learners had a strong motivation to attend the classes. The learners were confident in speaking as they felt free to give opinions. It was also indicated that as the activities were all related to life the learners were not bored. Moreover, the learners were not nervous.

### Description of the focus interview

The teacher used a semi structured interview with open ended questions to enable the learners to come forth with their opinions and experiences. During the interview the teacher recorded the



responses on her mobile phone as well as writing down key words and responses. The teacher also ensured equal participation among all the learners. Learners were asked to give as many responses as possible to enrich the study.

### **Discussion of the interview findings**

The objective of the focus interview was to investigate the opinion and views about the Eclectic approach on the learners in the experimental group. The qualitative results were categorized under the advantages of the Eclectic approach in improving the oral capacity of the learners, the learning using the Eclectic approach and the drawbacks of the approach.

Analyses of the 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 improving their speaking skills, which is consistent with the results of the speaking tests.

Though the participants have 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. The learners have 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 has helped the learners to enhance their speaking skills.

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.

Therefore, the learners have recommended the approach to other learners as well. As speaking English has become a need of the hour the approach will enable the learners to accomplish their goal. 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 results of the data from the questionnaire and focus interview indicate that the participants have a positive attitude towards the Eclectic approach. The approach has brought about significant differences in the vocabulary and pronunciation of the learners to enhance their speaking skills. Along with the improvement in aspects of speaking skill, the learners exhibited more confidence while communicating in English. Moreover, the application of the approach motivated the learners to learn more. Furthermore, the learners recommend the approach to other learners as well.

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