

## Assessing Eclectic Language Training for Children in Yogyakarta

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**Abstract** — This research investigates the effectiveness of eclectic approaches, combining experiential learning, multiple intelligences theory, gamification, and storytelling. English proficiency is increasingly vital for students, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal number 4: Quality Education. However, many elementary students in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, struggle with English. To address this, the Parish of St. Antonius Padua implemented an English language training program for underprivileged children. The research employed qualitative methods, observing two groups: grades 1 – 2 (Group A) and grades 3 – 6 (Group B). Group A focused on vocabulary building through engaging activities like songs and games, fostering enjoyment and vocabulary retention. Group B enriched vocabulary, grammar, and conversation skills using diverse media to enhance engagement and learning. The results indicate active participation and effectiveness across both groups, with differences in media preferences and engagement levels. Pictures, songs, games, and storytelling all contributed to develop language proficiency and confidence. This eclectic approach not only improved language skills but also promoted socio-cultural awareness and character development. In conclusion, the eclectic language training program in Yogyakarta enhances English proficiency and confidence among underprivileged children, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goal number 4. By addressing traditional teaching gaps and embracing innovative methods, educators create inclusive environments, empowering children for social and economic advancement.

**Keywords** — Eclectic approaches in language learning, experiential learning, multiple intelligence theory, Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education

**Abstrak** — Penelitian ini mempelajari efektivitas pendekatan eklektik yang menggabungkan pembelajaran berdasarkan pengalaman, teori kecerdasan ganda, gamifikasi, dan bercerita. Kemahiran bahasa Inggris semakin penting bagi siswa, sejalan dengan tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan nomor 4 mengenai pendidikan berkualitas. Namun, banyak siswa sekolah dasar di Yogyakarta, Indonesia, kesulitan dengan bahasa Inggris. Untuk menyikapi hal tersebut, Paroki St. Antonius Padua melaksanakan program pelatihan bahasa Inggris bagi anak-anak kurang mampu. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan mengamati dua kelompok: kelas 1 – 2 (Kelompok A) dan kelas 3 – 6 (Kelompok B). Grup A berfokus pada pengenalan kosakata melalui aktivitas menarik seperti lagu dan permainan, menumbuhkan kesenangan dan retensi kosakata. Grup B memperkaya keterampilan kosa kata, tata bahasa, dan percakapan, menggunakan beragam media untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan dan pembelajaran. Hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan partisipasi dan efektivitas belajar di kedua kelompok tersebut, dengan perbedaan dalam preferensi media dan tingkat keterlibatan. Gambar, lagu, permainan, dan bercerita semuanya berkontribusi pada peningkatan kemahiran berbahasa dan kepercayaan diri. Pendekatan eklektik ini tidak hanya meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa tetapi juga meningkatkan kesadaran sosial budaya dan pengembangan karakter. Kesimpulannya, program pelatihan bahasa eklektik di Yogyakarta meningkatkan kemahiran dan kepercayaan diri bahasa Inggris di kalangan anak-anak kurang

mampu, sejalan dengan tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan nomor 4. Dengan mengatasi kesenjangan pengajaran tradisional dan menerapkan metode inovatif, pendidik menciptakan lingkungan inklusif, memberdayakan anak-anak untuk kemajuan sosial dan ekonomi.

**Kata Kunci** — Pendekatan eklektik dalam pembelajaran bahasa, pembelajaran berdasarkan pengalaman, teori kecerdasan ganda, Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan 4: Pendidikan Berkualitas

### INTRODUCTION

English mastery for students has become increasingly crucial for success in their study as well as expanding social networks. This aligns with the sustainable development goals (SDG) number four that is “Quality Education”. Kopnina stated that the idea behind “Quality Education” is that all students should gain the information and abilities necessary to support sustainable growth [1]. Lauder states that that English is considered as one of global languages with the biggest number of speakers, and this drive the authority to include English as a compulsory subject at schools [2]. However, many elementary school students still perceive English as a challenging subject due to differences in spelling, pronunciation, and grammar compared to their native language, Bahasa Indonesia. The differences drive students to feel insecure in using the language. They feel reluctant to speak the language since they do not want to be laughed at when they make mistakes in grammar or pronunciation. This situation has forced parents to seek help by sending their children to take some extra English classes to equip them with sufficient exposure to English which require them to spend extra money for their children’s education.

Despite the recognized need of English proficiency, some children often lack access to additional language training due to financial or other constraints. Community initiatives, such as the English language training program implemented in the Parish of St. Antonius Padua, Kotabaru, Yogyakarta aimed to address this gap by providing a language learning course to underprivileged students who received scholarship from the church.

While there is a growing body of literature on language acquisition and teaching methodologies, there remains a gap in understanding the effectiveness of eclectic approaches, particularly for elementary school students. Therefore, this study is to find out how effective it is to apply eclectic approaches to elementary school children studying English.

There have been some approaches developed to help students learn at ease. Experiential learning developed by Kolb in 1984, as cited by Kong, focuses on students experiencing the language [3]. This approach has been applied to students learning accounting by Butler and friends [4], in higher education by Kolb and Kolb [5] and to kindergarten

children by Amalia [6]. When students experience the learning, they reflect on their experiences and learn from those by improving themselves in a repeated cycle. This cycle allows them to feel comfortable in the process of learning. Gardner (1983) developed a learning theory called multiple intelligences that started by eight intelligences and now has become nine: visual, verbal, mathematic, kinesthetic, music, intrapersonal, interpersonal, nature, and spiritual as cited by Kaushik [7]. Students have different intelligences that affect their behaviors, interests and learning styles.

This study combined the experiential learning and multiple intelligences theories to help young students learn English. To create experiences for students to utilize their various intelligences some media are applied, such as pictures, puppets, songs, and short video. And on top of the media, students are challenged to join competitions and storytelling. Hopefully, students can learn optimally since they enjoy the experiences of the learning processes and feel relaxed in class.

The first media chosen are visual in the form of pictures and puppets. Pictures, as stated by Gunawan are informative as it shows visual representative of the new words' students learn and the colors bring make them interesting [8]. Syafii et al. [9] recommend the use of puppet as it gives better experiences when students can direct the movement of the puppets they choose. Picture and puppets help students remember new words and their meanings as well as create a comfortable atmosphere for learning.

The second medium is songs. Zamin et al. [10], Tom and Joe [11], and Hendrawaty [12] apply songs in class to help students enrich their vocabulary and grammar. With the help of rhyme, beats, notes and melody, students repeat the lyrics and enjoy the music while unconsciously memorising the new vocabulary. On top of learning vocabulary and grammar in a fun way, songs also allow students to practice pronunciation correctly.

Audio visual media also brings fun atmosphere when students learn by watching and listening, they catch the message and create their own understanding of what happens. Indriana [13], and Cahyana [14] make use of short videos to teach English to students at vocational high schools. Nuraningsih and Aryanti [15] apply YouTube videos to teach English in university level. With moving pictures and sound, short videos serve as rich resources in language learning.

Besides the chosen media, this study also applies storytelling technique and playing games to make students practice their English. Nasir [16], Hidayati [17] and Syafii et al [9] apply storytelling technique to encourage students to apply the vocabulary and grammar points that they have learned. Widyahening [18] states that on top of learning how to use the language, storytelling also assists in building students' characters while they are having fun in creating, telling and listening to stories. On the other hand, playing games can also help students practice their English in a different situation. Saputra et al state that games are widely used in English classes for children [19] as they create fun atmosphere to class.

Each of the various media and approaches stated above has its own benefits and disadvantages. Therefore, teachers are required to orchestrate the media and approaches to maximise

the potentials to help students learn in an encouraging learning environment. Rao [20] and Saroinsong et al [21] combine various approaches to prevent boredom during class and increase English teaching effectiveness.

This research aims to fill the gaps in the English learning environment by investigating the outcomes of an eclectic language training program for children in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Thus, this research objective is to assess the effectiveness of eclectic language training approaches in improving English language proficiency and confidence among underprivileged children, thereby contributing to SDG number four, "Quality Education."

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed is qualitative data collection method in the form of observation. Mezmir [22] states that in order to analyze and give the underlying meanings of the raw data, qualitative data analysis involves changing the data through a variety of processes, including searching, analyzing, recognizing, coding, mapping, investigating, and summarizing patterns, trends, themes, and categories. The researchers conducted the study to track the progress of participants over an extended period, allowing for comprehensive evaluation of the program's impact. Furthermore, the researchers analyzed the effectiveness of the eclectic language training program by assessing various parameters, including language proficiency, confidence levels, engagement, and retention of learning.

The participants of this research were elementary school children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds who participated in the English language training program held by the education team of the Parish of St. Antonius Padua. There were 18 students in group A and 40 students in group B. Group A participants were the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders of elementary school, while group B participants were the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders of elementary school.

The data analysis utilized thematic analysis will be employed to identify qualitative insights into the perceived impact of the effectiveness of eclectic approach.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The eclectic language training program implemented in Paroki St. Antonius Padua, Kotabaru, Yogyakarta, aimed to improve English language proficiency and confidence among underprivileged children as they could not afford to join extra classes due to their financial situation. The program utilized experiential approach and multiple intelligence with the support of gamification and storytelling, to create engaging learning experiences with the use of various teaching media such as pictures, puppets, songs, short videos. By making use of various media, students could make use of various intelligences while they were experiencing the learning processes. The study assessed the effectiveness of these eclectic approaches and determine the most beneficial methods for enhancing English language skills and confidence among participants.

*The Eclectic Language Training in Group A: Introduction of Vocabulary and Basic Conversations*

Group A consisted of 18 students from the first and second grades of elementary schools. Some of them still had problems in reading and writing even in Bahasa Indonesia. Therefore, the focus of the class is to build students English vocabulary and use the vocabulary simple English conversations. Since they still have problems in writing, there was minimum written exercise and when there was a written exercise, it was limited to filling in blanks with alphabets or words. Due to the relatively short attention span of the students, activities needed to be designed to be both captivating and rapidly changing.

In Table 1, the performance of each of the media and activities is shown and explained below.

Table 1. Impacts of Eclectic Language Training to Group A

No.	Media/Activities	Fun	Engaging	Encouraging	Relaxing
1	Picture	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Coloring/Drawing	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Songs	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Games	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Short video	✓	-	-	✓
6	Story-telling	-	✓	✓	-

Pictures worked very well in the learning process. The visual presentation of the new words helped students to understand better and they could memorize the vocabulary faster. Students also consider pictures as fun and relaxing since the characters looked funny and colorful. When students were asked to answer questions given by the instructors, they could look at the picture and responded confidently. Students, sometimes, added some pictures of their own based on the discussion in class. Therefore, they also added new words to their memory.

Drawing or coloring also worked really well in class especially when they learned about shapes and colors. Students can choose their favorite colors for the shapes they like. They would spend some time happily while coloring the shapes or pictures. They also enjoyed drawing new pictures with the basic shapes given. When asked to present their work, they felt more confident and read the words or sentences they completed in front of the class happily.

Songs also elevated the class participations. Besides learning the new words from the songs, students also feel more enthusiastic. They memorized the lyrics, moved parts of their body to the beats and sing along. Some of them even danced to the music. They were happy when they could sing in groups and the other groups danced to the songs. At certain times students were found singing or humming the songs when they colored some pictures. Songs also helped them remember the vocabulary when they had to find the missing words from the lyrics.

Games play an important role to check on students understanding or memory. Games like Simon says, high five for five words, hangman, crossword puzzle, etc. helped students to show their performance in English without them realizing that they were still learning. When they made mistakes everyone laughed and no one felt discouraged. They just tried again and enjoyed the games that required them to practice their English in a fun situation.

In Group A, short videos were not used since students tended to be passive when they watched the videos. They preferred to focus on the video and refused to continue to the next activities. They were more engaged to watching the video quietly than to participating in other class activities.

Story telling in Group A is less fun than when using other media. Eventhough they were willing to fill in the blanks and read the sentences in front of the class, but they consider storytelling as hard. Besides, they tended not to listen to their friends presenting in front of the class since they found it boring.

Looking at the performance of each of the media above, it is necessary to blend the use of the media to increase the learning effectiveness. The sessions were designed to incorporate some media and activities to flow in such a way so that students did different activities that cover a certain topic within one meeting, i.e. alphabets, traveling, family, etc.

In one of the meetings, class started by the instructor calling one of the students' name. The student mentioned stood up and said his/her name repeated by the classmates. Then, the students were asked to spell the name using Indonesian pronunciation to make sure that the students understand alphabets. This activity was followed by learning English alphabet using ABC song. They were asked to sing the song in some groups and to point at the letters they mentioned. When they had no problems in pointing at the correct letters, then the instructor could have a dictation section when the students were competing to get points in groups. This activities allowed students to work together to be able to win the competition and get a prize in the form of a piece of paper with a picture and their names in it. As time was still available students are allowed to color the set of alphabets that spelled their names.

In other meetings, when there are no available song related to the topics, instructors asked students to say a set of words in a certain set of beats, so they read the words like rappers. Quizes also came handy to motivate students to be active again when they felt tired or bored. When they were still unmotivated in class, fun popular English songs unrelated to the topics can help enliven the class situation.

To carry out a fast changing class like this, instructors are required to prepare various media like pictures, puppets, songs, activities, quizzes, or games. It is essential to make sure that everything is handy, so that students can learn English while they are having fun with their friends and instructor. In Group A, the use of images, songs and interactive elements aimed to make the English learning process enjoyable and effective.

*The Eclectic Language Training in Group B: Enrichment of Vocabulary, Grammar, and Conversational Practice*

In contrast, Group B, comprising 40 students from grades 3-6, focused on enriching vocabulary, improving grammar, and practicing English conversation skills. With the students' readiness to learn, sessions could be conducted more seriously, but it was essential to supplement lessons with enjoyable activities to prevent boredom. In Group B, sessions began with self-introductions and reading exercises. Some pictures were utilized to explain meanings of certain vocabulary like nouns or verbs. They needed to match the sentences in the reading with the picture that matched. The use of pictures helped students to understand the new vocabulary that they were learning. They also felt fun and relaxing because the pictures can be funny and colorful.

Table 2. Impacts of Eclectic Language Training to Group B

No.	Media/Activities	Fun	Engaging	Encouraging	Relaxing
1	Picture	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Coloring/Drawing	-	-	-	-
3	Songs	✓	✓	-	✓
4	Games	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Short video	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Storytelling	✓	✓	✓	✓

Coloring and drawing did not work well in Group B. They considered this activity as childish and refused to do it. They preferred activities that make them feel they are older and more mature than their friends in Group A.

Songs for this group worked to teach grammatical points such as "You Raise Me Up" to learn cause and effect or the difference between action verbs and modals. Besides, they also helped for a relaxation when they were tired of doing their exercises. They were given songs which were fun and relaxing in between exercises. Students usually sing along when the instructors played the songs at a background music when they were completing the exercises in class. However, when they were asked to sing the song, they refused to do so.

Games and short videos work well with this group. They find it fun and relaxing. All of them were willing to join the games or exercises. Students found it easier to speak when they could learn the flow of a story from the short videos.

Group B also engaged in storytelling sessions, leveraging the effectiveness of narrative techniques in language learning. For instance, the reading of short stories, such as "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," and watching videos like "Pip" provided opportunities for vocabulary expansion and moral exploration. Storytelling did not only enhance language skills but also facilitated character development among the students. Subsequent sessions involved reading about Yogyakarta's Sonobudoyo Museum, followed by poster-making activities

to promote cultural awareness using their English vocabulary learned in previous sessions.

By placing language instruction in meaningful and culturally relevant contexts, this all-encompassing method attempted to strengthen linguistic bonds and advance sociocultural awareness. Students were encouraged to apply their language abilities in real-life circumstances by including a variety of activities, such as storytelling and poster-making, which improved their fluency and confidence in using English. Overall, Group B's structured but engaging lessons enabled students to enhance their language skills comprehensively, not just by learning vocabulary and grammar but also by honing their conversational skills in a nurturing and stimulating learning environment.

*The Assessment on the Application of Eclectic Language Training*

The application of eclectic language training through experiential learning and multiple intelligence with the help of various media to enable students to learn English can be seen from the table below.

No.	Media/Activities	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> Graders' participation	3 <sup>rd</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> Graders' participation
1	Picture, song, games	effective	effective
2	Picture, song, Coloring/Drawing	effective	not effective
3	Short video, storytelling	not effective	effective
4	Picture, storytelling	Indonesian English (mixed). The students' participation was high.	Simple English. The students' participation was high.

The use of pictures for the first and second graders helped increase their vocabulary building. Pictures provide visual representatives of the nouns and verbs they learned that help them remember the new words. For the third to sixth graders, besides helping students to memorize new vocabulary, pictures also helped them find some ideas in creating a story. Related to the use of pictures, coloring and drawing activities only work effectively for the first and second graders while for the older students this activity is less inviting since some of them consider this as childish.

The application of songs in both groups is considered effective with distinctive functions. For Group A, songs help children subconsciously build their vocabulary while they are having fun in singing and dancing. When students enjoy the songs, there is a big opportunity they sing the songs by themselves and memorize the vocabulary. For the older students, songs help them release the tension from learning. When the class situation becomes too tense, songs help them to relax and have fun so they are ready to continue their

English practice. However, while listening and singing the songs, they also learn the new vocabulary and grammar.

Short videos are applied in Group B. The videos allow them to learn about nouns, verbs and the flows of the stories. Videos also help students to learn some grammatical points. Later, videos can help students get some ideas when they have to create a story to tell. For the younger groups, videos are not applied in class.

Games are applied in both Group A and Group B. However, Group A used more games to ensure that students to practice the words they learned. Games like Simon says, hangman, high five, and simple quizzes are appropriate for Group A. While in Group B, there are fewer games to play since they also have to cover some serious materials. Games are more in the form of hangman and quizzes to make sure that they have understood the materials well.

Storytelling is the end product of the class. For Group A, storytelling is based on the pictures they drew or colored. They are asked to make simple sentences using the nouns, verbs or adjectives they have learned. Instructors provide some sentences and students were asked to fill in the blanks. They later tried to read the sentences in front of the class. The older students in Group B wrote stories individually or in groups. They make sentences that create a whole story. They, later, read their stories in front of the class.

#### *The Effectiveness of Eclectic Approaches in Language Training for Children in Yogyakarta*

The effectiveness of eclectic language training approaches in improving English language proficiency and confidence among underprivileged children directly contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education. As mentioned in Sarifa's study, an eclectic approach in teaching English language skills to primary school pupils has shown promising results, underscoring the significance of catering to diverse learning styles and intelligences [23]. By providing innovative and engaging language learning experiences, this program aligns with the SDG's objective of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all. The utilization of experiential learning and multiple intelligence theories underscores the importance of catering to diverse learning styles and intelligences, promoting a more inclusive educational environment that addresses the unique needs of each student.

Through the application of various media and activities such as pictures, songs, games, and storytelling, the eclectic approach seeks to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment where students can thrive. The incorporation of these methods not only enhances language proficiency but also fosters socio-cultural awareness and character development among students, aligning with the holistic objectives of quality education outlined in SDG 4. This aligns with Tien and Hanh's case study in Vietnam that demonstrates how the integration of multiple intelligences theory and experiential learning enhances language learning experiences for young learners [24].

Moreover, the findings from this study highlight the effectiveness of gamification and storytelling in enhancing

English language skills and confidence among underprivileged children. Gamification, characterized by interactive and engaging activities, promotes active participation and vocabulary retention, particularly among younger learners. On the other hand, storytelling provides a holistic learning experience that facilitates deeper comprehension of language structures and contexts, appealing to older students. This supports Al-Dosakee and Ozdamli highlight the role of gamification in enhancing learning outcomes, including language proficiency and confidence [25].

By addressing the gaps in traditional language teaching methodologies and embracing innovative approaches, this research contributes to the advancement of quality education for marginalized communities. By leveraging eclectic teaching methods, educators can create more inclusive and effective learning environments, ultimately empowering underprivileged children to access opportunities for social and economic advancement in line with the principles of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of an eclectic language training program in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, has shown promising results in enhancing English language proficiency and confidence among underprivileged children. By employing a combination of experiential learning and multiple intelligence theories, along with various media and activities such as pictures, songs, games, and storytelling, the program aims to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

The findings suggest that the eclectic approach not only improves language proficiency but also fosters socio-cultural awareness and character development among students. Through gamification and storytelling, students are actively engaged in the learning process, leading to better retention of vocabulary and deeper comprehension of language structures and contexts.

Moreover, the research contributes to the broader goal of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education by providing innovative and engaging language learning experiences that cater to diverse learning styles and intelligences. By addressing the gaps in traditional language teaching methodologies and embracing eclectic approaches, educators can create more inclusive and effective learning environments, ultimately empowering underprivileged children to access opportunities for social and economic advancement.

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