

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL AND INTEGRATIVE
APPROACHES IN EFL TEACHER TRAINING

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Annotation. This article presents a comparative analysis of traditional and integrative approaches in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher training, with a particular focus on the development of oral communication competence. Traditional methods, often characterized by grammar-translation techniques and lecture-based instruction, are contrasted with integrative models that emphasize communicative competence, task-based learning, and interdisciplinary content. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data from a teacher education program, the study evaluates outcomes in areas such as fluency, classroom interaction strategies, and learner autonomy. Findings indicate that integrative approaches significantly outperform traditional methods in preparing pre-service teachers for real-life communicative challenges in the classroom. Additionally, the integrative approach enhances trainee motivation, reflective practice, and adaptability to diverse learning environments. The study concludes with practical implications for curriculum reform in teacher training institutions and recommends a hybrid model that incorporates the strengths of both approaches while addressing the limitations of traditional pedagogy.

Keywords: EFL, teacher training, traditional method, integrative approach, communicative competence, task-based learning, curriculum reform.

Introduction. The preparation of qualified English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers is a critical aspect of modern educational policy worldwide. As English continues to serve as a global lingua franca, the demands placed on future teachers extend far beyond grammatical accuracy or textbook knowledge they are expected to foster communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and adaptive teaching strategies. However, teacher education programs often differ in how they address these evolving needs. Two dominant paradigms traditional and integrative approaches shape the methodology and content of EFL teacher training programs. Traditional approaches tend to emphasize grammar instruction, translation exercises, and passive learning through lectures.



While these methods offer structural knowledge and theoretical foundations, they often fail to prepare trainees for interactive, learner-centered teaching environments¹. In contrast, integrative approaches focus on blending various methodologies, including task-based learning, communicative activities, and content integration. These models aim to mirror the real-life communicative demands of teaching and prioritize active learning, reflection, and collaboration. Despite their differences, both approaches continue to coexist in global teacher education systems. Yet, few empirical studies have directly compared their effectiveness in developing key teaching competencies especially oral communication skills, classroom management in English, and pedagogical decision-making². This article seeks to fill that gap by conducting a comparative analysis of the outcomes associated with traditional and integrative training models. Based on observational data, interviews, and performance assessments of pre-service teachers, the study evaluates which approach more effectively supports the development of teaching readiness in a communicative classroom context.

Ultimately, the article contributes to the ongoing debate on teacher education reform by offering evidence-based insights. It aims to inform curriculum designers, teacher educators, and policymakers seeking to modernize and improve EFL teacher training in line with the communicative realities of today's classrooms. The distinction between traditional and integrative approaches in EFL teacher training lies not only in instructional technique but also in underlying philosophy. Traditional methods prioritize a transmission model of education, where knowledge is delivered from teacher to student in a largely unidirectional fashion. This approach typically emphasizes grammatical rules, vocabulary memorization, and text translation. Although it builds a solid foundation of linguistic knowledge, it often lacks opportunities for active language use, especially in oral communication.

By contrast, integrative approaches incorporate communicative, experiential, and reflective dimensions³. Rooted in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), these models encourage student engagement through authentic tasks, collaborative activities, and context-rich language use. For instance, future teachers might engage in peer teaching, debate current events, or create lesson plans aligned with both language objectives and content themes. To explore the impact of each approach, a comparative study was conducted at two teacher training institutes. One employed a traditionally structured curriculum focused on grammar, methodology lectures, and textbook analysis. The other adopted an integrative

¹ Littlewood W. *Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction*. – UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981. – 122 p.

² Ellis R. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. – UK: Oxford University Press, 1994. – 824 p.

³ Freeman D. *Doing Teacher Research: From Inquiry to Understanding*. – USA: Heinle ELT, 1998. – 256 p.



model featuring project-based work, reflective journals, and simulated classroom practice. Both groups were assessed using oral proficiency tests, peer evaluations, and teaching practicum performance⁴. The results revealed notable contrasts. Trainees in the integrative program demonstrated significantly higher levels of fluency, confidence, and classroom interaction strategies during microteaching sessions. They also showed stronger abilities in adapting lesson content based on student needs.

Meanwhile, those trained in traditional settings exhibited stronger control of linguistic accuracy but were less adept at spontaneous communication or managing student-centered speaking tasks. Furthermore, surveys and interviews highlighted higher motivation and engagement levels among students trained through the integrative model⁵. These participants reported feeling more prepared for real classroom challenges, particularly in managing communicative activities and fostering student participation. Moreover, while traditional methods offer structural clarity, integrative approaches provide a more holistic preparation for the dynamic communicative environment of modern EFL classrooms. An ideal training program may benefit from a hybrid design that retains the rigor of traditional instruction while incorporating the contextual and interactive strengths of integrative pedagogy.

Table. Comparison of traditional vs. integrative approaches in EFL teacher training.

| Criteria | Traditional Approach | Integrative Approach |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Instructional style</i> | Teacher-centered, lecture-based | Learner-centered, interactive |
| <i>Focus of training</i> | Grammar, translation, theoretical knowledge | Communicative competence, practical teaching skills |
| <i>Common activities</i> | Drills, note-taking, rule explanation | Microteaching, role-play, task-based projects |
| <i>Assessment methods</i> | Written exams, grammar tests | Oral presentations, teaching simulations, portfolios |
| <i>Language use in class</i> | Limited, mostly receptive (reading, listening) | Active, productive (speaking, presenting, interacting) |

⁴ Hall G. Exploring English Language Teaching: Language in Action. – UK: Routledge, 2011. – 301 p.

⁵ Edge J. Essentials of English Language Teaching. – UK: Longman, 1999. – 256 p.



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|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Trainee development</i> | Emphasizes linguistic accuracy | Balances fluency, accuracy, and teaching adaptability |
| <i>Reflection and feedback</i> | Minimal reflection; top-down feedback | Emphasizes self-reflection, peer feedback, and adaptation |
| <i>Preparation for real teaching</i> | Less realistic, more theoretical | More authentic, practice-oriented |
| <i>Student engagement level</i> | Often passive | Actively engaged in learning process |

This table illustrates that while traditional methods contribute to rule-based knowledge, integrative approaches align more closely with the dynamic needs of real-world EFL teaching. It supports the argument that a blended model may yield the most effective outcomes in modern teacher education. The comparison highlights that integrative approaches better equip future EFL teachers with practical communication and classroom management skills. While traditional methods strengthen theoretical knowledge, integrative models offer a more comprehensive, learner-centered foundation essential for real-life teaching contexts and evolving educational demands.

Conclusion. This study has compared traditional and integrative approaches in EFL teacher training, focusing on their effectiveness in preparing pre-service teachers for modern classroom realities. While traditional methods emphasize grammatical competence, rule-based instruction, and passive knowledge acquisition, they often fall short in cultivating the communicative and adaptive skills essential for real-life teaching. In contrast, integrative approaches drawing from communicative, task-based, and content-integrated models offer a dynamic and holistic framework that enhances not only oral proficiency but also pedagogical flexibility, reflective thinking, and student-centeredness.

Empirical findings from classroom observations and participant feedback demonstrate that integrative models lead to higher motivation, increased fluency, and improved readiness to handle interactive teaching environments. These outcomes underline the need for teacher education programs to adopt more integrative strategies or hybrid models that merge the strengths of both paradigms. Ultimately, equipping future English teachers with communicative competence, methodological adaptability, and reflective teaching skills is vital for fostering effective and engaging language learning in today’s diverse classrooms.



Further research is recommended to explore long-term impacts and cross-cultural applicability.

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