

A Comparative Pedagogical Approaches in Grade 7 English Textbooks: An Analysis of *Oxford* and *Cambridge Books* in Pakistan

Aqsa Bibi¹, Ayesha Bibi² and Maryam Nawaz³

<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2026.15.3.11>

Abstract

Language Learning and teaching are important tasks in today's rapidly evolving times. A teacher's skilful approach, along with well-designed textbook content, can help simplify the complex language-learning process for students. This research compares pedagogical analyses of Grade 7 English textbooks using the Oxford and Cambridge syllabi in schools in Pakistan. The investigation focuses on the frequency, type, and impact of the exercises on students' writing fluency and grammatical accuracy. This study investigates differences in the nature of exercise content between Cambridge English and Oxford English textbooks used in Pakistan. The analysis revealed that the major divergence was generally associated with exercise types that are more contextualised and interactive, rather than the repetitive, structured drills found in Oxford textbooks. The study concludes with suggestions for improving textbook design and the teacher's approach to address students' competence gaps in language learning outcomes.

Keywords: Pedagogical Approach, English Textbook, Analysis of Oxford/Cambridge Books.

Introduction

Textbooks play a pivotal role in formal education by fostering language competence in early learners. In Pakistan, English textbooks are of two types: Oxford and Cambridge. Both differ in exercise frequency, design, and the overall efficacy of the materials. Awareness of differences in the design and scope of textbook exercises is, therefore, the basis for the evaluation of textbook exercises in terms of their contribution to writing fluency and grammatical accuracy. Thus, this study would examine the frequency of exercise in Grade 7 English textbooks, the contrasting educational systems in which they are used, and how their applications relate to students' learning outcomes.

Recent research indicates that repetition of the exercises is a critical feature in skill acquisition. According to Ferguson et al. (2024), the effect of different exercise formats on retention of multi-word expressions (MWEs) may be more critical than exercise type in enhancing language acquisition. This suggests that books featuring a variety of exercises, when used repeatedly, may promote students' internalisation of certain grammatical structures and enhance their writing fluency.

Consequently, Vitta (2021) researched functions and characteristics of ELT textbooks, classifying a portion of their function as quality control and proficiency development. He confirms the importance of structured exercises in textbooks, which could be a foundation for successful language teaching. Moreover, the article demonstrated that textbook analysis has expanded to include representations of culture and pedagogical effectiveness, which is

¹MPhil English Linguistics, Riphah International University Islamabad. Email: bibiagsa830@gmail.com

²MPhil English Linguistics, Riphah International University Islamabad. Email: ayeshbibi473@gmail.com

³MPhil English Linguistics, Riphah International University Islamabad.

Email: maryamriphahmphil@gmail.com



significant for comparative studies. The systematic review by Pan and Zhu (2022) examined English textbook research in the Chinese context, focusing on the production, application, and assessment of textbooks. According to the authors, textbooks should strike a balance among linguistic input, cultural inclusion, and structured exercises. So, to maximise students' learning, this need aligns with evaluating the frequency of exercises in Pakistani textbooks for their effectiveness in improving writing fluency and grammatical correctness.

In a study by Chen and Liu (2023), the researchers examined how various exercises affect students' grammatical accuracy using corpus-based statistics. The authors believe that contextualised exercises on grammar use are far more effective than decontextualised, random concept-checking or grammar-translation exercises. Wang and Zhao (2022) conducted a study on the efficacy of exercises for grammar learning in second-language acquisition, demonstrating that textbooks with task-based activities have significantly lower student retention of the content.

Regarding the meaning of exercise, the writers contend that context-specific exercises focused on grammar function are much more effective than arbitrary or decontextualised checking of ideas or grammar-translation exercises. Jones and Patel (2024) examined how textbooks influence teachers' practice regarding the balance of exercise frequency for pedagogical effectiveness in ESL materials. They discover that more structured, repetitive exercises are more stimulating. Kumar and Singh's (2025) longitudinal study found that students who practice textbook exercises practically are likely to further enhance their writing fluency and grammatical correctness.

Lastly, Lee and Tan (2023) conduct a comparative analysis of English textbooks' grammar exercises and identify key instructional trends, including language correctness. According to the findings, it is plausible to deduce that textbooks which incorporate gradual scaffolding and interactive activities provide optimal learning for learners. Collectively, these studies provide a robust foundation for investigating how frequently exercises or activities appear in Grade Seven English textbooks published by Oxford and Cambridge in Pakistan. This study will compare their teaching and learning approaches to identify the most appropriate practices for effective language pedagogy. It will thereby shed light on textbook design, how textbooks shape students' writing skills and grammar abilities, and the implications of the findings for future curricular modifications and English pedagogy.

Research Objective

To analyse and compare pedagogical strategies that effectively enhance students' writing fluency and grammatical precision, identifying best practices for instructional improvement and pedagogical refinement.

Research Question

What pedagogical strategies effectively enhance students' writing fluency and grammatical precision?

Research Methodology

This study adopts a comparative qualitative approach to examine teaching strategies for Grade-7 English textbooks published by Oxford and Cambridge in Pakistan. The approach involves content analysis, in which exercises are categorised by teaching methods, engagement levels, and learning outcomes. The most widely used English course book in Pakistan is the one prescribed by the Punjab province. Therefore, the researcher selected the Grade 7 English textbook from the Punjab (Lahore Board) used in Oxford textbooks. The researcher chooses Grade 7 because it marks a transition from lower to secondary education. The theoretical

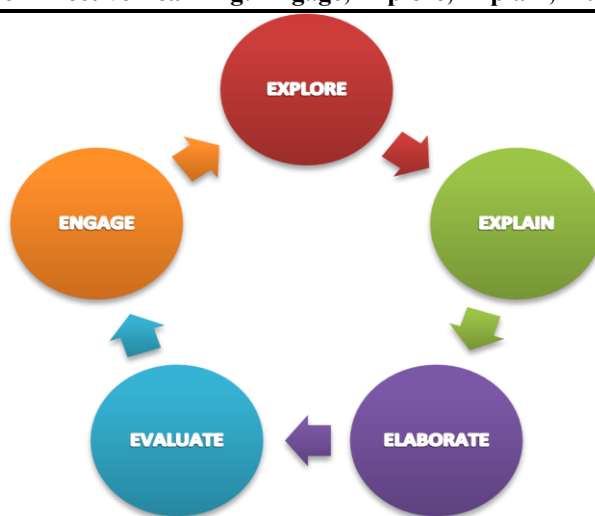
frameworks researchers choose to conduct the research are: the 5Es of Effective Learning and the Role of a teacher to analyse textbook alignment with instructional strategies used.

5Es of Effective Learning

The essence of integrated language teaching is teaching the main and sub-skills of language as a whole. This approach covers communication-based and skill-based teaching methods. The meaning and the context are the most important elements. This is widely accepted in the constructivist theory (Jordan et al., 189-190).

Language learning is not product-oriented but process-oriented. Language learning is inherently a long and slow process. The teacher's efforts to accelerate this process and disrupt natural language learning do more harm than good. Since the student's readiness to learn is extremely important, the first step is preparation – emotional, cognitive and linguistic (Oxford).

Figure 1: The 5Es Model of Effective Learning: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate



Learning is a continuous process that follows different stages. This diagram highlights five key steps that guide effective learning: *Engage*, *Explore*, *Explain*, *Elaborate*, and *Evaluate*. Each step builds on the previous one, creating a structured approach to knowledge development.

The first step, *engage*, sparks curiosity and interest in a topic. Teachers capture students' attention through thought-provoking questions or activities. This motivates learners to participate actively in the learning process.

Next step, *explore* all concepts by interacting with materials, conducting research, and making observations. This hands-on learning allows them to develop a deeper understanding of the subject. They investigate ideas and connect them to real-world situations.

During the *explain* phase, students organize and express their findings. They clarify their understanding by discussing concepts, answering questions, and refining their thoughts. Teachers guide them by providing structured explanations and helping those correct misconceptions.

The *elaborate* stage encourages students to expand on their knowledge. They apply concepts to new situations, analyze information more critically, and strengthen their reasoning. This step deepens learning and promotes independent thinking.

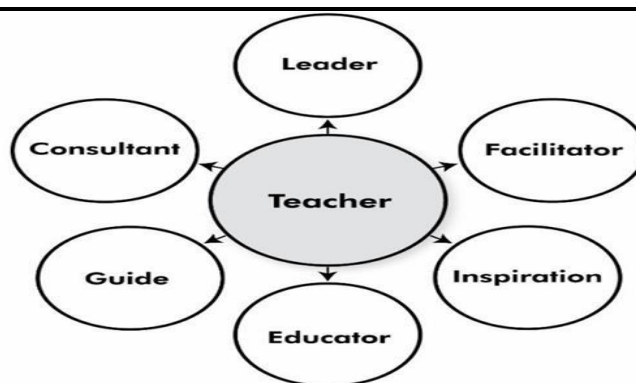
Finally, *evaluate* allows learners to assess their progress. They review their understanding, apply knowledge to problem-solving, and receive feedback. This reflection helps them identify strengths and areas for improvement.

By following this cycle, students engage actively with learning and develop meaningful understanding. Each stage contributes to a well-rounded educational process that enhances retention, application, and academic success.

Roles of a Teacher

The concept of the *teacher* has changed according to the needs and environmental factors of our age. Nowadays, the teacher cannot be defined as a person who only possesses certain knowledge and transfers it to others, as it was the case in the past. Today, when sources of information are not limited to teachers and the individual has extremely quick access to information, the teacher has assumed the roles of *leader*, *source of inspiration* and *person who teaches learning*. The changing course of history has defines teacher as a pivotal and central pillar of education. In present time the source of information has changed from just one figure to diversified fields: digital libraries, online social media posts, and influencers' videos. In this age educational institutes needs to change the ways of imparting the knowledge. In this regard teacher is not only [person who has all the knowledge, that's how the role of teacher has changes.

Figure 2: Role of Teacher



A teacher acts in many roles in guiding a student to success. This diagram displays six crucial responsibilities surrounding the teacher as the intervening figure. Each role describes a distinct manner in which a teacher supports learning and growth.

Teachers lead by setting clear expectations and instilling confidence in their students. They *lead* the students, organizing the learning environment for ambition. As *facilitators*, teachers help students to discover. In fact, they do not merely deliver information but provide situations in which students can explore, question and think critically.

In *inspiration*, a reminder of the motivation, teachers give in encouraging learning. Teachers inspire curiosity and urge their students in reaching their potential. As *educators*, they impart knowledge and skills. They explain the concepts, give feedback and fine-tune understanding through the very structure of a lesson.

Teachers are *guide*; walking beside students as they faces challenges and make decisions. They provide access to resources, assist with student inquiries, and suggest approaches to learning. Finally, there is the *consultant* role through which the teacher provides personalized assistance to students in tackling their problems, adapting learning pathways, and enhancing the weaker areas.

Each role interrelates with others in a holistic teaching approach. However, the teacher's influence encompasses not only the instruction but also the assurance, engagement, and eventual success of the student. Thus, by striking a balance among these roles, the educator ensures the creation of a learning environment that nurtures growth and results in achievement.

In conclusion, effective language instructions fuses together all forms of 5E learning cycle, integrated model and teacher's role. These frameworks will help researcher to analyze how textbook exercises influence writing fluency and grammatical accuracy in oxford and Cambridge in the study. The study identifies key focus areas around which institution specific pedagogical frameworks can be structured.

Data Analysis

The data is analyzed through the lens of 5Es model and the contexts where teacher roles keep changing. The table below summarizes the all analysis of both textbooks;

Table 1: Comparison of Pedagogical Aspects in Oxford and Cambridge books Used in Pakistan

S. No	Aspects		Exercise frequency	Task –Type	Students Engagement Level	Instructional Approach	Assessment Method
01	Reading	Oxford	Frequent	Guided Reading, MCQ based	Passive and Moderate	Explicit	Teacher-led assessment
		Cambridge	Moderate	Contextual Reading	High	Implicit	Discussion based
02	Grammar Practice	Oxford	Frequent Structural Drills	Fill in the Blanks, Sentence Correction	Low to Moderate	Explicit and rule-based	Formal tests
		Cambridge	Integrated in writing exercise	Error Analysis, Contextual Grammar applications	Moderate	Contextualized and implicit	Applied grammar Assessment
03	Critical Thinking Exercises	Oxford	Occasional	Short Responses	Moderate	Implicit Learning	Open-ended evaluation
		Cambridge	Frequent; problem solving and reasoning	Open-ended discussion	High	Inquiry-based	Interactive Feedback
04	Writing Skills	Oxford	Structured Composition Exercises	Sentence Building tasks	Moderate	Explicit	Rubric-based grading
		Cambridge	Creative writing and analysis	Free writing	High	Scaffolded Learning	Holistic Portfolio and Evaluation
05	Communication Skills	Oxford	Limited Oral Interaction	Minimal	Low to Moderate	Implicit	Oral assessment
		Cambridge	Strong Emphasis	Debates, presentations	High	Inquiry-driven	Oral Presentations
06	Listening Practice	Oxford	Minimal Scripted Dialogues	Audio-based Comprehension	Low	Exposure driven	Comprehension Quizzes
		Cambridge	Frequent	Audio-based Discussions	High	Exposure driven	Comprehension-based

Oxfords are known to emphasize repetitive drills for reinforcing grammar rules through structured exercises, such as fill-in-the-blanks; the Cambridges set these exercises in real-life situations to stimulate critical thinking through debate and creative writing. Oxford primarily emphasizes grammatical accuracy, whereas Cambridge institutions prioritize fluency through real-world problem-solving task. In oxford textbooks, giving immediate feedback concerning grammatical precision, stifle creativity and long-term retention. Cambridge strategies endorse realizations by making links to practical contexts. Teachers in Cambridges assume active

mediating roles in discussion and feedback, while teachers in oxford textbooks are very didactic in their methods.

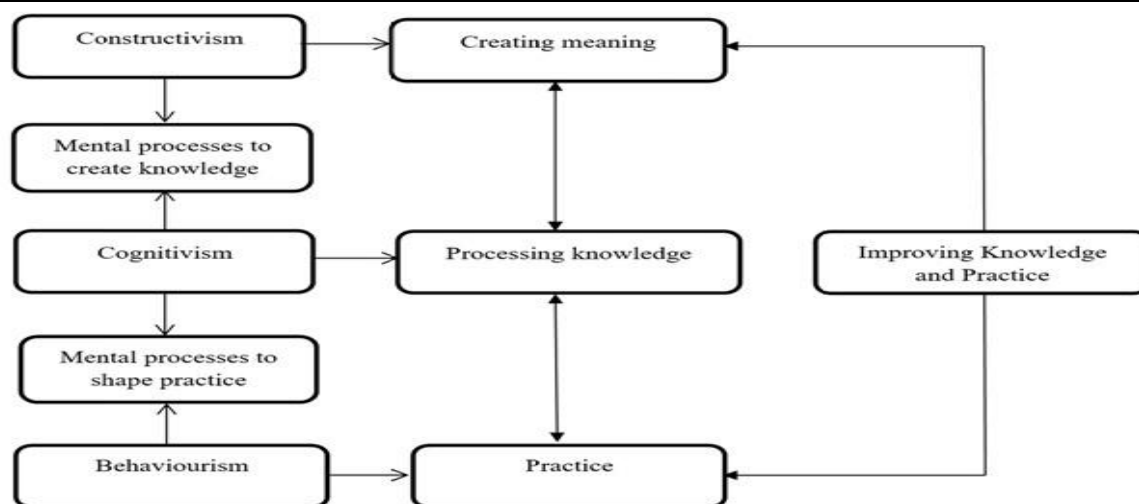
In the context of Cambridge Textbooks Designs and Oxford Textbook's Designs, both have goals to achieve. Cambridge aims to develop critical thinkers open to diverse discussions, whereas the Pakistani system emphasizes knowledge acquisition, often in a rigid and limited framework. Its textbooks are open ended with different structural approaches towards each chapter while Pakistani textbooks are following the same criteria of exercises to all the chapters. This contrast highlights the impact of curriculum design on student engagement and critical thinking development.

Findings

The data analysis came to the point of identifying significant strategies to answer the research question. In the recent realm of education, Pakistan is facing differences in the institutes' approaches. Oxford and Cambridge textbooks; all have different criteria and goals, but in higher education all the systems converge as one University system which create problems for the students educational growth. Pakistan must urgently bridge this gap to ensure meaningful outcomes from the efforts of its youth.

Some strategies that could benefit the Pakistani education system include; training of teachers to know all the requirements of educational systems, shifting textbooks simple long text with different color highlights of complex and new vocabulary words, skillful integration of Pedagogical theories and Encourage real-world writing, like journals or emails. The Cambridge approach scaffolds writing tasks from free writing into critical analysis to develop fluency in writing. Oxford seems to get a quicker uptake in terms of grammatical accuracy but do not enjoy better communicating competence. For the improvement of results, both systems have to strike a balance between repetition and creativity and train their teachers on how to fill the gaps.

Figure 3: Integrated Model of Language Teaching



Cambridge textbooks are designed to focus on the modern needs, clear definitions for learners, and more flexible, while Oxford textbooks are known for its historical depth, comprehensive vocabulary, and more traditional approach. Both textbooks are used in Pakistan and this dual nature of textbook design usage confused the students. This creates a difference in students' knowledge: some become critical thinkers while some solely focused on vocabulary and written text. This divides the youth in two categories, one is potent speakers: need of modern market, while the other are still confused about what they learned: seems irrelevant to the time.

Learning occurs when the students engage in thinking and skill-building. *Constructivism* permits students to make meaning by interpreting information. They do not simply memorise facts. Rather, they build knowledge by relating concepts to their experiences. This serves as a bridge for positive criticism, fostering deep understanding among learners.

Cognitivism concerns how the mind processes information. Students structure knowledge, apply strategies, and refine their level of thinking. They are not passive recipients of lesson content; they actively engage in their learning by working through problems and making connections. This internal engagement helps them remember and apply knowledge.

Behaviourism stresses the place of practice. The students embed skills through repetition and feedback. This rigour improves correctness and sets confidence. When students apply writing and grammar exercises in context, they sharpen their self-expression with structured communication.

All three theories work together. Students first realise knowledge through understanding, process it by organising their thoughts, and refine it by applying their skills. This cycle ensures effective learning and enables progressive skill development. It is through the amalgamation of these forces that a teacher may develop her own methodology to promote both fluency and accuracy in writing.

According to Funk (2012), there should be a balance between input and output in the process of teaching a second or foreign language. This model provides theoretical input for students, encourages them to express their understanding and practice, and provides feedback to reinforce their learning. Thus, the balance between the theoretical understanding and the practical application of the skill to be taught is essential in this model.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, revising textbooks and ensuring comprehensive teacher training are necessary steps to address the educational issues of the present. It is not a waste to emphasise various instructional roles such as leadership, facilitation, and mentoring, as it will increase educational attainment. The Cambridge validation of the Integrated Language Teaching (ILT) model confirms the harmonisation of rules and critical thinking capabilities, along with the creativity that will be used to develop a newer language pedagogy in Pakistan. Oxford textbooks, on the other hand, need to adopt the same approach to achieving a balance between fluency and accuracy. This shift is not just theoretical but practical: the need of the hour for developing competent, confident English learners. A strategic integration of both textbooks as one could effectively address the challenges faced in higher education.

Moreover, the five cognitive stages enable students to respond appropriately solve the problems assigned to them interactively and cooperate with their peers, and assess their own competencies. Overall, this study contributes to students and textbook designers alike by keeping these essential points in mind. Future researchers could explore the same topic through a quantitative lens, for example, by distributing questionnaires to students from both Oxford and Cambridge. Additionally, they may investigate the scope and depth of content provided in textbooks across various educational levels.

References

- Begović, A. (2020). Integrated language teaching. *Patchwork: New Frontiers*, 5–15.
- Chen, Y., & Liu, H. (2023). The role of textbook exercises in developing grammatical accuracy: A corpus-based analysis. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 41(2), 215–230.
- Ferguson, J., Smith, L., & Patel, R. (2024). Effects of different exercise formats on multiword expression retention. *Journal of Language Learning and Teaching*, 38(2), 112–130.

- Funk, H. (2012). Four models of language learning and acquisition and their methodological implications for textbook design. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 9(1), 298–311.
- Jones, R., & Patel, S. (2024). Textbook design and pedagogical impact: A study on exercise frequency in ESL materials. *TESOL Quarterly*, 58(1), 67–85.
- Jordan, A., Carlile, O., & Stack, A. (2008). *Approaches to learning: A guide for teachers* (pp. 189–210). Open University Press.
- Kumar, P., & Singh, A. (2025). The influence of textbook exercises on writing proficiency: A longitudinal study. *Language Teaching Research*, 29(3), 345–362.
- Lee, C., & Tan, M. (2023). A comparative analysis of grammar exercises in English textbooks: Implications for pedagogy. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 31(2), 189–205.
- Pan, M. X., & Zhu, Y. (2022). Researching English language textbooks: A systematic review in the Chinese context (1964–2021). *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 7, Article 30.
- Vitta, J. P. (2021). The functions and features of ELT textbooks and textbook analysis: A concise review. *RELC Journal*, 54(3), 856–863.
- Wang, X., & Zhao, L. (2022). Evaluating exercise effectiveness in second language acquisition: A comparative study of English textbooks. *International Journal of Language Education*, 19(4), 487–502.
- Yassin, A. A., Abdul Razak, N., & Tg Mohamad Maasum, T. N. R. (2019). Integrated model for teaching language skills. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9(5), 89. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v9n5p89>