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## **An Investigation of Effective Grammar Teaching Method: The Experimental Study at St. John Catholic School, Ethiopia**

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### **Abstract**

This investigation aims to assess the effectiveness of mixed grammar teaching methods in enhancing students' grammar usage in both speaking and writing communication. The study used an experimental research design. One hundred twenty learners were selected using the simple random sampling technique. The data-gathering instruments employed to meet the aim of the study were pre-test and post-test questions. The data gathered from the participants were analyzed using SPSS and ANOVA. For this study, one experimental and two controlled groups were organized. The Eclectic or mixed method was employed to teach grammar in the Experimental group (group "C"). Unlike this, for controlled group "A" and Controlled group "B," Deductive and Inductive methods were used, respectively. The ANOVA result shows a significant difference in mean score between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental Group and the two controlled groups. Besides, the result of the analyzed data reveals that there is no significant difference in pre-

test and post-test mean score results between the controlled group "A" (deductive method) and controlled group "B" (inductive method). The "Experimental group" shows a significant difference in using correct grammar in their writing (the pre-test mean score using correct grammar in writing was 4.08, and the post-test mean score was 4.20) and speaking (pre-test mean score using correct grammar in speaking was 2.58 and the post-test mean score was 4.18). Therefore, this study found that the Eclectic grammar teaching method is the most effective method to improve learners' correct grammar usage in their writing and speaking performance.

**Keywords:** Deductive, Eclectic, Grammar, Inductive, Method, Speaking, Writing

### **1.Introduction**

English is a global language that becomes more and more significant every day. It plays a crucial part in the expansion of educational opportunities throughout the world. Students should start with a firm grasp of the language's basic grammatical principles. By doing so, learners improve their ability to express themselves clearly and effectively. Learning correct grammar is also a fundamental step in communicating effectively (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2017). Grammar helps learners become more fluent in language communication. Proper grammar knowledge can give a deeper understanding of how language works. Grammar is the foundation of any language that allows correct expressions and understanding of the system of the language. So, it is undeniable that grammar knowledge helps learners in speaking and writing English.

Learning the grammar of the English language is essential to communicate effectively both in writing and speaking. Students will need a strong understanding of English grammar to communicate effectively in English. Students' ability to build sentences in both oral and written communications will improve as their knowledge of grammar grows. Students with a deep knowledge of grammar are better equipped to write straightforward sentences (Mart, 2013). It is a fact that certain students will shine at learning English grammar while others will struggle.

English is a focus for advancement in the educational system. Therefore, students at all levels study it with little excitement since they consider it unimportant in their lives. However, they focus on achieving better results by mastering English grammar and vocabulary (Nasser, 2018). It is often assumed that teaching grammar would prepare learners for future studies and careers (Muayad, 2018). For this reason, it is common practice for students to memorize the form without the practical usage of grammar in writing and speaking the language. English Teachers who are unable to balance the instructional process will not be seen as effective teachers. This helps to explain why some English teachers seem unable to enhance their students' interest in grammar and why most students view studying English grammar as a tedious activity. Furthermore, some English teachers lack even a methodical understanding and professional ability in English grammar.

Using correct grammar has always been a difficult subject for learners. Several studies investigated students' challenges when attempting to acquire English grammar (Nasser, 2018). The failure of students to master English grammar in many schools may be due to the teaching methods and the teaching materials employed (Saeed & Jafar, 2016). The importance of proper grammar cannot be overstated. It is essential for students to learn grammar

since knowledge of grammar provides them with the tools, they need to construct correct sentences and convey meanings. Learning proper grammar helps students sound better when they express themselves in written and verbal communication.

Mahdi (2018) researched students' difficulty in grammar learning at the Iraq University of Technology. The findings indicated that students make numerous mistakes while using speaking and writing. Several factors, such as teacher incompetence and teacher-centered teaching techniques, cause these grammar mistakes. Nasser (2018) stresses that Iraqi students' difficulty with writing is due to grammatical mistakes because of a lack of qualified teachers, ineffective teaching methods, and insufficient time spent on grammar instruction. In order to develop an effective approach to teaching English grammar, educators should realize that even perfect knowledge of grammar does not give full command of the language, but a complete command of the language includes knowledge of grammar (Kokorina & Litunova, 2020).

Despite the advances in education over the last several decades, many English teachers still need help with the old instructional concept. They believe that success in the classroom is measured solely by students' grades and the results of their efforts rather than the learning process. Currently, some English instructors use

fixed pedagogical practices which focus on memorization rather than cultivating students' capacity to apply what they have learned in the classroom. Although students can learn grammar forms in class, they often struggle when applying the usage in a real-world situation.

In most English classrooms, some English teachers are more concerned with sharing their knowledge than encouraging their students' performance to use the correct grammar in their daily language. In reality, this method of instruction does not help the learners to develop their language skills. Moreover, they do not emphasize using effective grammar teaching methods. So, the concept of teaching English grammar is problematic for English instructors themselves. On the contrary, students rely heavily on classroom instruction to learn new material, improve practical skills, and create accurate conceptual understandings. This shows that students would benefit much from an effective method of teaching. To that end, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that boosting teachers' teaching efficiency is one of the essential issues in the instructional process. The existing students' difficulty using correct grammar in their written and spoken language and teachers' ineffective grammar teaching methods motivate the researchers to conduct this study.

The previous research found two methods of grammar teaching, but this study found an Eclectic or mixed method of grammar teaching. The existing grammar methods (deductive and inductive) have their own drawbacks, but the Eclectic or mixed methods have no drawbacks. The deductive method of grammar teaching helps learners to use correct grammar in their written language, but the inductive method helps learners to use correct grammar in their spoken language. So, there is no grammar teaching method that is used to develop students' correct grammar usage in both their speaking and writing skills. Therefore, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. Which grammar teaching method is the best method?
2. What are the procedures to use the best grammar teaching method?
3. Which grammar teaching method is helpful to develop the use of correct grammar in both speaking and writing skills?

In this study, the following hypotheses were developed to be tested, such as:

1. There is no significant difference in mean score between the pre-test and post-test results of the controlled group "A" in using correct grammar in their writing and speaking.

2. There is no significant difference in mean score between the pre-test and post-test results of the controlled group "B" in using correct grammar in their writing and speaking.
3. There is no significant difference in mean score between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental Group (group "C") in using correct grammar in their writing and speaking.

Finally, this study found a novel grammar teaching method which is called the Eclectic or mixed method. This study introduces a new and effective grammar teaching method that enhances students' correct grammar usage in their written and oral communication by 94.6% (the pre-test mean score using correct grammar in writing was 4.08 and the post-test mean score was 4.20) and speaking (pre-test mean score using correct grammar in speaking was 2.58 and the post-test mean score was 4.18).

## 1. Review of Literature

### 2.1 The Deductive Method

The term "Deductive Method" refers to a method of reasoning that moves from rules to examples. With this approach, the rules are presented to the learner first and followed by examples. This approach employs the use of textbooks to teach students on proper grammar usage. The instructor uses textbook examples to illustrate the rules. After some instruction, students

are given a series of activities designed to assess their knowledge. This approach deviates from the pedagogical views of going from familiar to unfamiliar and easy to difficult strategies.

## 2.2 The Inductive Method

In the Inductive method, examples are provided first, and then rules are deduced from those examples. This method gives students the freedom to learn independently.

## 2.3 Teaching Grammar through Induction and Deduction Methods

The issue of a better grammar teaching method is still a controversial topic. There has been some discussion about whether or not grammar rules should be presented explicitly or implicitly. Teachers of English as a second language often debate between a deductive and an inductive method when teaching students grammatical structures.

Teachers who use a deductive approach believe that theory should come before practice. According to this method, teachers introduce that specific grammar rule to them in detail and offer them practice with it before students use a grammatical concept in their own writing. Students are given activities and tasks after each class to ensure they have mastered the material covered.

The deductive method of teaching grammar aims to raise students' awareness of and adherence to grammar rules. Brown (2007) argues that the deductive method is

appropriate for advanced English as a foreign language student. The advocators of this method believe that learning grammatical rules at the start of the class benefits learners. Nevertheless, the deductive method has been questioned. According to Larsen-Freeman (2009),

One of the most trenchant criticisms of this approach is that students fail to apply their knowledge of grammar when they are communicating. Students know the grammar- at least, they know the rules explicitly- but they fail to apply them in their oral communication (p.523).

In fact, the goal of grammar teaching is not just for memorizing various grammatical structures but also for their application in everyday conversation (speaking). Students are expected to master the grammar rules to write and speak in a target language effectively. Lack of this mastery makes grammar a threatening subject. Learners feeling stressed about learning grammar would diminish their interest in studying English (Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019). Grammar is crucial in creating communication tasks throughout all four skill areas Rachmawaty N. et al., (2019)

Currently, many qualified English teachers are aware of the issues associated with traditional approaches to teaching English.

However, some English instructors favor the old-fashioned approach to teaching English. They believe that the best way to enhance learners' efficiency is by making learners repeat what they have learned several times through exercises. In addition, many learners have the greatest need for and strongest preference for the deductive grammar teaching method. This is because it places the responsibility on the shoulders of the teachers to teach the rules in an advanced and detailed manner.

The inductive method places the grammar rules under study in the context of dialogues and games (problem-solving). Students are encouraged to read and analyze texts or examples critically and find out the particular grammar rules. This method is also called the learner-centered approach. As a result, students are better able to absorb grammatical concepts and use them correctly while expressing themselves. In an inductive learning classroom, students give close consideration to the presentation of material. However, teacher-centered is a deductive grammar teaching method that makes the learners passive participants (Khodaeian, 2021).

Students are more likely to pay attention in a classroom if there is a conducive atmosphere to interact, engage, and collaborate. Teachers may foster this environment by inspiring confidence in their students and making them aware of the significance of their involvement in class (Manea &

Gări-Neguț, 2021). In addition, they argue that exercises that involve practicing grammar should be increased in educational sessions since these activities accumulate the subjects in the student's memory and help them comprehend and recognize them.

Guvendir and Hardacre (2020). Stated that to have students actively engaged in meaningful communication with native speakers, task-based language teaching is a method for teaching a foreign language. In this sense, a 'task' is a meaning-oriented activity given in the target language that allows students to communicate, increasing their opportunities to use the language. This method is essential for the transmission of grammatical knowledge, as it increases communicative language use. Afraa (2021) stated that Game strategy could improve students' grammar while identifying specific grammar features that will be improved. It also demonstrates that learners' motivation was improved by game strategy, and the process of learning grammar can attract them more.

Teaching grammar includes a wide range of tasks with unique characteristics, including the level of explicitness, the method of teaching, the teaching time, the breadth of coverage, the role of teachers, and objectives (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). For example, while teaching English grammar, many educators assess their learners' academic performance by comparing their outcomes in several

tasks. This method of assessing classroom teaching is useful for measuring students' knowledge and performance, but it cannot shed light on more subjective factors like students' motivations, emotions, and values.

Furthermore, Altun and Dincer (2020) investigated the differences between the deductive and inductive approaches to teaching grammar to intermediate-level students and found that the deductive method of grammar teaching had a more noticeable effect on students' grammatical competence. Liu, J. et al., (2019). Argues that it is well known that both the method of communication used in a classroom and the level of students' prior knowledge affect the quality of the instruction process; however, the nature of the interaction between these two aspects and the underlying mechanism process remains unclear. The teachers' teaching method directly impacts students' learning outcomes (Qiu, 2018). Even though many teachers spend more time on teaching grammar, it appears to have little effect because maybe they have challenges or limitations in their professional abilities to teach English grammar.

Teachers who lack clarity on "teaching effectiveness" struggle with student engagement. So, this point's fundamental aim is to show the importance of effective teaching methods. According to Bembenutty (2009), a crucial component of education is students' ability to

critically assess the effectiveness of their teachers' teaching methods and the courses they take. It is also generally accepted that English teachers place special consideration on students' learning and pay close attention to their teaching methods.

Teachers are expected to foster their students' creative thinking, efficiency in learning, growth, and development by designing a variety of autonomous, exploratory, and research-based learning activities. It is important to note that students' learning progress and growth are strongly related to whether or not a teacher improves teaching effectiveness. Accordingly, it is important to evaluate and refine the English grammar teaching method in light of how it influences students' motivation to learn the subject matter as a whole.

Even though teachers have tried to assess students' grammar learning situations from many angles, they have not provided any effective method to encourage their learners' grammar performance both in writing and speaking. Nowadays, educators worldwide are emphasizing the significance of quality-based education, which needs teachers' strong commitment to work on the overall students' learning development.

Despite the fact that numerous studies have been undertaken on the challenges and solutions associated with the method of teaching grammar, nothing is suggested as the best and

most effective method of grammar teaching. This means that the present unsuccessful grammar teaching methods give the opportunity to this study to innovate a new and effective method that can be the best solution for the existing problem. Currently, no such widely accepted effective method of grammar teaching can be used as evidence. The inadequacy of prior research on this subject encourages the researcher to further explore and develop the field.

Therefore, the researchers are motivated to fill the gap that exists in grammar teaching methods by innovating a new grammar teaching method that is the most effective in enhancing students' correct grammar usage both in written and spoken communications.

### 3. Method

In this study, eleventh-grade students from St. John Catholic School participated in a three-month (January-March 2022) long experiment. Purposive sampling was used to select 120 students for the study. The samples were chosen from three sections of Grade 11. From each section, 40 students were selected. Section "A" and "B" were taken as controlled Groups, whereas section "C" is considered an experimental group.

The experiment was conducted for three months. The 11 "A" section, Controlled group "A," was taught grammar using the deductive method.

11 "B" section, the Control group, "B," was being taught grammar using the inductive method, and 11 "C" section, the Experimental group was being taught grammar using the Eclectic (mixed) method. Standard Rubrics for Grammar assessment in both writing and speaking aspects were developed. Both writing and speaking tests were designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed grammar teaching methods. The study participants' grammar knowledge was checked twice using pre- and Post-test evaluation. The data gathered through Pre-test and Post-test were analyzed using SPSS Version 26. ANOVA was employed to test the hypotheses.

### 3.1 Methodological Procedure

The study had three phases: pre-testing, intervention, and post-testing

#### ***Controlled Group "A" Teaching Methods***

Grade 11 "A" students, controlled group "A," were taught various grammar forms in deductive or explicit grammar teaching methods. The grammar lessons include tenses, subject-verb agreement, active-passive voices, articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. This control group learned the above grammar lessons for three months.

#### ***Controlled Group "B" Teaching Methods***



Grade 11 "B" students, the controlled group "B," were taught various inductive or implicit grammar forms. The grammar lessons include tenses, subject-verb agreement, active-passive voices, articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. This control group learned the above grammar lessons for three months.

### ***Experimental Group (group "C") Teaching Methods***

Grade 11 "C" students, the Experimental group, were being taught various grammar forms in Eclectic or mixed (deductive and inductive) grammar teaching methods. The grammar lessons include tenses, subject-verb agreement, active-passive voices, articles, prepositions, and conjunctions. This Experimental group learned the above grammar lessons for three months.

### **The procedure of the Deduction Grammar Teaching Method**

The approach that is used in this classroom is called a Traditional (Teacher-Centered) approach. The deductive approach to teaching grammar makes the students use grammar in their written sentences. Here, teachers talk, but students talk very little. The class has three phases:

#### ***A. Presentation***

- presenting the overall principle of the grammatical concept.
- getting students to say the rule out loud in the Group or individually.
- helping students understand the general rule by providing examples of sentences.

- requiring learners to memorize the general rule to improve their grammatical skills.

#### ***B. Practice***

- giving students practical tasks in the language for better internalization of the grammar rule.

#### ***C. Production***

- letting students produce their own sentences using the new grammar structure they have learned to check their understanding.

### **The procedure of Induction Grammar Teaching Method**

The approach that is used in this classroom is called a Communicative (Learner-Centered) approach. The inductive approach to teaching grammar makes the students use grammar in their oral communication. Here, students talk a lot, but teachers talk little. The class has three phases:

#### ***A. Presentation***

- writing some examples using the grammatical concept needed to be taught. Such examples may be taken from an article or a dialogue.
- getting students to concentrate on the meaning behind the grammar variation in the given examples.
- requesting students to create their own sentences similar to those written on the board.
- asking students to figure out the rule or the form on their own to assimilate and internalize the concept.
- getting the class to speak out the rule collectively or individually.

- explaining the use of the new grammar using basic English words or synonyms

**B. Practice**

- letting students practice the new grammar form through real-world English language activities

**C. Production:**

-asking students to create their own sentences using the new language pattern they have learned.

**The procedure of the Eclectic Grammar Teaching Method**

The approach used in this classroom is called a Communicative (Teacher-learner-centered) approach. This method of teaching grammar makes the students use grammar in their oral and written communication. Here, both students and teachers talk and write much. The class has three phases:

**A. Presentation**

-presenting the overall principle of the grammatical concept.

-getting students to say the rule out loud in the Group or individually.

-helping students understand the general rule by providing examples of sentences.

- requiring learners to memorize the general rule in order to improve their grammatical skills.

-writing some examples using the grammatical concept needed to be taught. Such examples may be taken from an article or a dialogue.

-getting students to concentrate on the meaning behind the grammar variation in the given examples.

- requesting students to create their own sentences similar to those written on the board.

-asking students to figure out the rule or the form on their own to assimilate and internalize the concept.

-getting the class to speak out the rule collectively or individually.

**B. Practice**

- letting students practice the new grammar for better internalization of the grammar rule through real-world English language activities

**C. Production**

- Let students produce their own sentences in written and spoken form using the new grammar structure they have learned to check their understanding and connect with real-world life.

**4. Analysis**

Table 1. The ANOVA Analysis Result of Per-Test and Post-Test of Grammar in Speaking and Writing.

		ANOVA				
Types of test	Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pre-Test	Between Groups	51.01	2	25.50	54.31	.000
Grammar in Writing	Within Groups	54.95	117	.47		
	Total	105.96	119			

Pre-Test	Between Groups	56.60	2	28.30	94.33	.000
Grammar in	Within Groups	35.10	117	.30		
Speaking	Total	91.70	119			
Pre-Test	Between Groups	34.55	2	17.27	28.56	.000
Grammar in	Within Groups	70.75	117	.60		
Speaking	Total	105.30	119			
Pre-Test	Between Groups	64.06	2	32.03	59.56	.000
Grammar in	Within Groups	62.92	117	.53		
Speaking	Total	126.99	119			

Table 1 shows the mean score results of the pre-test and post-test of the three groups related to using correct grammar in writing and speaking communications. The table depicts that there is no significant difference between the controlled group "A" and the controlled group "B" in their pre-test and post-test mean scores in using correct grammar usage. It means the control group "A" and "B," who learned in deductive and inductive grammar teaching methods, did not significantly improve in using correct grammar in their written and spoken communication in their post-tests.

In addition, the analysis indicates a significant difference in pre-test and post-test mean scores between the controlled group "A" and the experimental Group. Similarly, the table reveals a significant difference in pre-test and post-test mean scores between the controlled group "B" and the experimental Group. This means the experimental Group who learned grammar in mixed or Eclectic methods showed an improvement in using correct grammar both in written and oral communication.

Table 2. Mean Score of Pre-Test and Post-Test Grammar in Writing

Types of test	Group	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
			1	2	3
Pre-Test	Controlled Group "B"	40	2.58		
Grammar in	Controlled Group "A"	40		3.80	
Writing	Experimental Group (group "C")	40		4.08	
Post-Test	Controlled Group "B"	40	2.60		
Grammar in	Controlled Group "A"	40		3.84	
Writing	Experimental Group (group "C")	40			4.20

Table 2 depicts the pre-test and post-test mean scores in correct

grammar usage in the writing of the two controlled and experimental

groups. As it is seen, the mean score of the controlled group "A" in the pre-test was 3.80, and the post-test mean score was 3.84. This shows no difference in students' pre-test and post-test results in using correct grammar in their writing. In addition, the mean score of the controlled group "B" in the pre-test was 2.58, and the post-test mean score was 2.60. This shows no difference in students' pre-test and post-test results

in using correct grammar in their writing. Unlikely, the mean score of the experimental Group in the pre-test was 4.08, and the post-test mean score was 4.20. This shows a considerable difference between students' pre-test and post-test results in using correct grammar in their writing.

Table 3. Mean Score of Pre-Test and Post-Test Grammar in Speaking

Types of test	Group	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
			1	2	3
Pre-Test	Controlled Group "B"	40	2.58		
Grammar in Writing	Controlled Group "A"	40		3.80	
	Experimental Group (group "C")	40		4.08	
Post-Test	Controlled Group "B"	40	2.60		
Grammar in Writing	Controlled Group "A"	40		3.84	
	Experimental Group (group "C")	40			4.20

Table 3 depicts the pre-test and post-test results in correct grammar usage of the two controlled and experimental groups in speaking. As it is seen, the mean score of controlled group "A" in the pre-test was 2.38, and the post-test mean score was 2.42. This shows no difference in the pre-test and the post-test of the controlled group "A" in using correct grammar in their speaking. In addition, the mean score of the controlled group "B" in the pre-test was 3.60, and the post-test mean score was 3.63. This result also shows that there is no difference in mean score results in the pre-test and the post-test of the controlled group "B" in using correct grammar in their speaking. However, the mean score of the experimental Group in the pre-test

was 2.58, and the post-test mean score was 4.18. This shows that there is a considerable difference in mean score results in the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group in using correct grammar in their speaking.

## 5. Discussion

Most English as a foreign language learners have difficulty using correct grammar in their writing and spoken language. Some of them may be good at using the correct grammar in their oral communication, whereas others are good at using the right grammar in their written text. The students who are good at using correct grammar in their spoken language are those who were taught grammar through the deductive teaching method, whereas those who are good at

using the right grammar in their writing texts are those who were taught grammar through the inductive teaching method. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages, so many students cannot use correct grammar equally in both their oral and written communications. Amazingly, the result of the study came up with a new grammar teaching method called the Eclectic or mixed method.

Table 1 shows no significant difference in mean score value between the pre-test and post-test results of the controlled group "A" and the controlled group "B" in using correct grammar in their writing and speaking. However, the control group "A" showed good use of grammar in their writing texts, and the control group "B" showed good use of grammar in their oral communication. Nevertheless, the finding shows a significant difference in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental Group and the controlled groups in using correct grammar in their writing and speaking communications.

Table 2 shows that the mean score of the experimental Group in the pre-test was 4.08, and the post-test mean score was 4.20. This shows that there is a considerable difference between students' pre-test and post-test results in using correct grammar in their writing. Furthermore, Table 3 exhibits that the mean score of the experimental Group in the pre-test was 2.58, and the post-test mean score was

4.18. This shows that there is a considerable difference between students' pre-test and post-test results in using correct grammar in their speaking. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference in mean score between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group in using correct grammar in their writing and speaking," is rejected.

The "Experimental group" shows a significant difference in using correct grammar in their written and spoken communication in the Post-test result. This implies that the Eclectic grammar teaching method is the best and the most effective method to enhance students' correct grammar usage in their writing and speaking.

## 6. Conclusion

The effective teaching method is the backbone of the instruction process. Teachers can only help students learn when they use the right and effective teaching method. Teachers have used deductive or inductive methods to teach grammar for several decades. These methods couldn't fully help students use correct grammar in their written and spoken languages. Because of the incompleteness of the two methods, this study was conducted and found a new grammar teaching method called the Eclectic or mixed method. This method incorporates the components of the deductive and inductive methods. It is an effective grammar teaching method that helps teachers enhance

their students' grammar knowledge and improve their classroom instruction. The eclectic or mixed grammar teaching method is where teachers are expected to give students a detailed explanation of a new language pattern and provide students with various communicative exercises that help them master the grammatical rules through practicing writing and speaking languages.

Language teachers are advised to use Eclectic or mixed grammar teaching methods to improve their students' correct communication usage significantly. This study is limited to St. John Catholic School because of time and financial constraints. Future researchers may conduct similar studies on some schools and tertiary institutions to generalize the result to be accepted worldwide.

#### Statements and Declarations

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no known competing financial or non-financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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