

Challenges of English Language Teaching and Departmental Support in Secondary Schools: Experiences of Public Secondary Schools Teachers

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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to investigate the factors which create problems for English teachers. The secondary reason for conducting this study was to know about the departmental support to English teachers. The researcher has chosen a mix-method to explore the factors causing problems and departmental support to English teachers. By keeping this desire in view, English teachers of secondary level try to give their best to the students but unfortunately due to some basic factors they face many problems in teaching the learners effectively. Most of the secondary level English language learners even do not know the ABC of English. There is no focus on students' language learning by their parents. The study results have been presented in the form of a table and interpretation of the semi-structured interviews. SPSS software is used to investigate the thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is described in the form of frequency, mean and standard deviation. The results show that there should be enough exposure to the language to learn English at the secondary level. Most of the students cannot study English at the Secondary level, but unfortunately, there is no system to stop and focus on making their base.

Keywords: Challenges, Teaching, Language, Departmental, Support.

1. Introduction

A language is a tool that people use to communicate with one another so that everyone can understand one another. Language can help us to organize our thoughts, ideas, feelings, and other emotions. Many languages are spoken worldwide; in certain cases, a single country may speak two or more languages. Furthermore, many people speak multiple languages in today's world. The term "English" refers to a set of widely spoken languages. Even though English is now widely used for several purposes. We began with education and progressed through business, politics, and technology (Rao, 2019).

As we know, English is the most widely spoken language on the planet, the importance of learning English cannot be undervalued in today's society. Not only as a communication tool but also as a learning tool, English can help us to adapt to the environment and operate it in the present and future. As a result, we can think about how important it is to learn English in daily life (Al-Issa, 2017).

The importance of English as a global language cannot be denied. English's rise provided unrestricted access to the modern world of science, information technology, money, power, global communication, and intercultural understanding, as well as entertainment and a variety of other fields. Teaching English to young learners, several critical issues have been recognized. The first is that English is occasionally declared a mandatory subject in primary school without enough preparation (Aluoch, 2020).

It is important considering who will be in charge of teaching it. Multiple countries have reported a serious shortage of English-trained secondary school teachers. As a result, teachers may teach English to secondary level learners without adequate preparation in general or in teaching English to the learners in particular (Mullaney, 2019). In impoverished or rural areas, the situation is especially terrible. One of the most difficult policy decisions affecting the classrooms of young learners is pedagogy. Because English is as widely used as a lingua franca, many people believe that students should improve their communication abilities rather than learning English. As a result, today's curricula for young students place a high value on communicative competence (Songbatumis, 2017). English is taught as a mandatory subject up to the graduate level in Pakistan's educational system. Despite spending more than 14 years learning English, most non-elite school students lack the required command of the language to pursue higher education and professional careers (Fareed, Jawed, & Awan, 2018).

English language, like blood, runs through the veins of nations around the world. As a result, the demand for English language skills has escalated to the point where individuals of modern civilizations must be fluent in excelling academically and professionally (Fareed et al., 2018).

Administrative Assistance the department is in charge of departmental support. Employees have access to training and educational opportunities connected to their jobs. During normal working hours, in-service training is usually provided to the government teachers. Efforts to improve employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, and service quality, focusing on instructional approaches

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(Rajan, 2021). In-service training is for people who have previously been recruited by school districts and are already qualified. It comes in several different formats. Teacher performance is improved by in-service training. A teacher's experience is enhanced by fresh ideas, concepts, and activities. In-service training helps teachers to improve their overall attitudes and educate them on how to recognize individual variances (ACHANA, 2019). INSET (in-service teacher education) helps teachers to improve their overall effectiveness and skills. A teacher's ability to stay current in their specialty is critical. All of the methodologies, activities, and learning experiences established to help teachers improve their professional competencies are refreshed through in-service education for teachers. In-service education programs can take several shapes: group or individual, formal or informal (Uztosun, 2018).

Regular study courses, educational workshops, lectures, discussions, interviews, and the supervision of individual studies of professional literature by teachers themselves are all examples of this. As a result, any teacher who aspires to retain a high level of performance, competence, and distinction among his peers must participate in in-service education and training for teachers (INSET) (Nur & Short, 2019). The need for continual teacher education and training is being emphasized. Continuous professional staff improvement has three primary causes or purposes. The first reason is that all teachers and administrators must continue to educate themselves to stay current on changes in subject matter and teaching theory and practice. Continuous education is necessary to keep the profession current with fresh information and to release creative potential. The second goal is to offer much-needed support to teachers who are new to a school or transitioning to a different role or sector of the profession. The third rationale for in-service education is to address deficiencies in the background training of teachers and other educational professionals (Kim, Raza, & Seidman, 2019).

Shah, Aajiz, and Idris (2018) explored the reasons that cause students in Pakistan to fail to acquire English. They uncovered several factors that contributed to the poor results. Teaching English was proving to be difficult for them. They conducted a study on English teaching and learning hurdles and discovered that large class sizes in Pakistan enhance challenges in learning and teaching the language. The syllabus was written without taking the students' requirements into account. The curriculum, which incorporates creative activities, needs to be completely overhauled and changed. Tayan (2017) looked into the attitudes and perspectives of students and teachers in language schools when it came to multimedia. According to the findings, both students and teachers had a positive attitude and perspective on the usage of multimedia technology. They complimented its implementation and viewed multimedia as a valuable tool for bringing the classroom to life and making the learning-teaching experience a success. Hussain, Akhtar, Shabbir, Aslam, and Arshad (2021) have written about the current profile of English teachers in Pakistan. The data show that there exist gaps in the form of career barriers for English teachers. According to the study, teachers lacked the essential academic credentials to be regarded as competent English language instructors in the majority of situations, according to the poll. This study also advised pre-service and in-service training for teachers and reforms in teacher hiring practices.

2. A Literature Review

One of the most important things a person can do these days is to learn English. The importance of learning English means expanding one's knowledge and opportunities in a global context. Furthermore, English is spoken by nearly 250 million individuals daily on every continent. Colonialism, shipborne trade with the Americas, and political issues influence the use of English worldwide, but colonialism, shipborne trade with the Americas, and political factors are also influencing it. As a result, non-native English-speaking countries work to create an English-speaking environment in every school as the first step in teaching English to children at a young age (Larsen-Freeman, 2018). When English is taught as a foreign language, it is studied in non-native English-speaking countries. A native speaker will generate a better teacher than a non-native speaker in any setting. According to this comment, when training students in English and teaching skills, an English teacher has several difficulties. In addition to strengthening their English abilities, teachers must maintain their energy and passion in the classroom. Students' enthusiasm to learn may fade to the point where they diverge from the instructional plan in their learning performance. This issue is one of the causes of instructors' lack of enthusiasm in the classroom, and it will negatively affect their teaching performance (Calafato, 2019). The school climate is another factor that affects teacher motivation. The principal facilitates a positive school climate, teachers' partners, school employees, and community school organizations (Dernowska, 2017). In the twenty-first century, an effective English teacher must also be able to instruct. Because it is dependent on a subjective viewpoint, determining successful teaching is difficult and risky. Effective teaching can be measured from two perspectives: intrinsic and extrinsic (Scoular & Care, 2018). Motivation, excitement, and interpersonal ties with pupils are all examples of intrinsic teacher attributes. The extrinsic element is the teacher's competence, which may develop through training to improve their teaching ability, such as their knowledge of instructional materials and methods. Creating a curriculum, lesson plans, and supplementary resources are examples of instructional content design and development. Then there's teaching strategy, which refers to how you teach, manage your classroom, and approach your lessons (Poulou, 2020).

Within and outside the classroom, teachers in my setting face a range of challenges. The lack of opportunities for students to practice their language skills in classrooms is at the top of the list. The daily 35-minute English session is the learners' only opportunity to utilize English at the secondary level is not enough to teach textbook, grammar and communications skills. Furthermore, because they are transitioning from one language to another, these pupils do not have enough opportunity in the classroom to practice English while learning other topics (Juvonen, Lessard, Rastogi, Schacter, & Smith, 2019). Teachers of various classes frequently have to switch from English to Urdu or their home tongue to guarantee that their students understand the material, either due to a lack of English competency or to ensure that students understand it. As a result, the targeted language is rarely spoken. Language learning requires a lot of exposure (Manan, 2020). As proposed by Bashir and Batool (2017), the English teacher is left with the sole responsibility of assisting students in developing English competence within a 35-minute lesson because the language spoken outside the classroom and at home is primarily Urdu and the mother tongue of the learners in cities and other local languages in rural areas.

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Mirza (2017) investigated the challenges L2 learners in Pakistan's rural areas have speaking English and determined that English is taught in schools is also problematic. According to the research, creativity should be infused into the English curriculum. Mukhtar, Sahito, and Siddiqui (2021) found that English was learnt to get good grades in exams, not be proficient in the language. In the same fashion as other necessary subjects in Pakistan's Northern provinces. He discovered that this regrettable situation is due to a lack of a suitable learning environment. Instructional materials and possibilities are scarce for professional development. Boerchi, Magnano, and Lodi (2021) investigated the factors that influenced the academic success of English learners. The researchers classified these characteristics as personal learning factors, family background factors, peer factors, and institutional factors. The findings show that a student's family environment has a big influence on their academic progress. According to the study, educated parents should establish a conducive environment for their children's academic performance. "Because their English proficiency is weak or they have so little trust in their competency". Javed (2017) argues, English teachers – notably in government institutions choose to teach the language through the medium of Urdu or a local language. English teachers do this practice because the secondary level students have very little exposure to English language. The real issue with the teachers is that they are uninformed of the complexities of the English language, especially when it comes to spoken English. In most cases, teaching English is mistakenly equated with translating into a second language (Urdu).

3. Methodology

A methodology is a scientific and logical procedure that follows the selection of a topic and is based on sampling and data collecting to obtain the desired research findings. The researcher has used mix-method study to investigate the factors causing English teachers problems teaching at the secondary level students. The major sources of data collection were a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview for English instructors in the government secondary schools, Punjab, Pakistan. The population of this study was the English language teachers in the government secondary schools, Punjab, Pakistan. The samples of the study were 100 English teachers of government schools of Punjab.

A mixed-method approach was employed in this study, which entailed collecting and evaluating both quantitative and qualitative data to examine the questions of interest. The current study was performed using a mixed-method technique that included quantitative and qualitative research. However, the researcher employed questionnaires and data collection procedures to obtain the required research outcomes. Questionnaire and Semi-Structured interview were the main tools for data collection of the present study. English teachers' problems and issues regarding teaching language skills at secondary level were identified via using these research tools.

4. Data Analysis

Table.1 Results of English teachers' survey

Statement	Results	%ages	Mean	St. Deviation
1. Disturbed and Unfavorable study environment of the class affect my teaching.	Yes	85.7%	8552	.35253
	No	14.3%		
2. Use of Native and mother tongue in classrooms creates hurdles to teach and learn English language efficiently.	Yes	87.7%	8774	.27597
	No	12.3%		
3. Students' lack of interest in learning English Language skills lowers the effectiveness of Teaching Methods.	Yes	77.9%	7693	.41524
	No	22.1%		
4. Overcrowded classrooms are a major challenge for English teachers to deliver the lecture properly.	Yes	82.7%	8241	.70705
	No	17.3%		
5. Limited teaching facilities and resources hamper the better teaching of English language skills.	Yes	71.9%	7195	.41314
	No	29.1%		
6. During lecture students' agitation in the class affect the teaching of the teachers.	Yes	64%	6434	.49031
	No	34%		
7. Social background of the students creates challenges for the teachers to get good results of English subjects.	Yes	73.3%	.7353	.42968
	No	26.7%		
8. Students' dependence on cramming is also a major issue for the English teachers to develop the English language skills of the students.	Yes	86.7%	.8667	.34565
	No	13.3%		

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9. Unavailability of teaching A.V. aids influence the teaching and learning of English language skills properly.	Yes	73.3%	.7343	.44968
	No	26.7%		
10. Lack of departmental support regarding educating language skills creates difficulty for the English teachers.	Yes	70%	.7000	.46608
	No	30%		
11. Students' insufficient knowledge about English grammar is also an issue for English teachers to enhance their language skills.	Yes	90%	.9000	.30531
	No	10%		
12. Students are not encouraged by their families to learn English language skills.	Yes	63.3%	.6331	.49033
	No	36.7%		
13. Students' passiveness in inventive writing creates a serious issue for L2 teachers in educating English writing skills.	Yes	70%	.7000	.46069
	No	30%		
14. Students do not use English language in the class in order to develop their speaking skills.	Yes	79%	.7896	.40862
	No	21%		
15. Insufficient departmental teaching training regarding English language skills lowers the efficient teaching of the teachers.	Yes	58.3%	.5827	.49385
	No	41.7%		

4.2. Descriptive analysis of English teachers' survey

The questionnaire was designed for English teachers to know the different challenges and issues English teachers face while educating English language skills to the students at the secondary level in the government schools. In the first question, 85.7% of the English teachers responded that the unfavorable and disturbed environment of the class affects their teaching of English language, while 14.3% of the teachers did not agree with this statement. In the second question, 87.7% of the respondents answered that the use of native and mother tongue secondary classrooms create hurdles for teachers to teach and learn English language efficiently. Students' lack of interest in learning language skills lowers the effectiveness of teaching methods, and 77.9% of the English teachers agreed to this statement, while 22.1% disagreed with this question. In the fourth statement of the questionnaire, 82.7% of the English teachers answered that overcrowded classrooms are a major challenge for teachers to properly deliver language skills in public schools. In comparison, 17.3% of the respondent responded against this question. In the fifth question, 71% of the teachers responded that English language skills cannot be taught effectively due to limited facilities and

teaching resources. In comparison, 29.1% of the respondents disagreed with this statement. In the sixth question, 64% of the English teachers agreed that learners' agitation during lectures lowers the rhythm of the instructors' teaching concerning English language, while 34% disagreed with it. The Social background of the students is also another issue for the teachers they encounter while teaching language skills to their learners. 73.3% of the research participants agreed to this question, while 26.7% opposed this statement. In question number eight, 86.7% of English teachers gave their consent that students' dependence on cramming creates various problems to develop students' language skills, as students rely on rote learning and their creativity does not develop. At the same time, 13.3% of the participants did not agree with this statement. In question number nine, 73.3% of English teachers consent that unavailability of supporting teaching A.V. aids influences the teaching and learning of English language skills appropriately. While 26.7% of the research respondents responded against this statement. According to Question number ten, 70% of teachers answered that lack of departmental support concerning educating language skills produces difficulty for English language teachers to enhance the proficiency and creativity of the students. Only 30% of the participants disagreed with this question.

In question 11th, 90% of English teachers believed that insufficient knowledge about grammar is another issue for the teachers to improve the English of their learners. And 10% of respondents did not consider this. In question number twelve, 63.3% of the English instructors answered that students are not encouraged by their families to learn English language skills; therefore, it creates difficulty for the class teachers in teaching language skills. While 36.7% of the research respondents disagreed with it. According to question thirteen, 70% of the class teachers answered that students' passiveness in innovative writing creates a serious issue for L2 teachers in educating English writing skills at the secondary level. And 30% of the respondents opposed this statement. In question number fourteen, 79% of the English instructors answered that students do not use the English language as classroom instructions in the class; this also creates problems for the teachers to mount the students' speaking skills. While 21% of the respondents did not consider it an issue to develop speaking skills. According to question number fifteen, 58.3% of the class teachers gave their consent that due to lack of latest teaching training and facilities regarding English subjects and language skills, the efficient teaching of English teachers. 41.7% of the participants disagreed with this statement that training does not matter for successful English language skills.

4.3. Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were performed with English teachers to learn about their perspectives on the problems and issues they face while educating English language skills and the variables that impede learners' creativity in English.

Interpretation of Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection method in which researchers ask only a few planned but open-ended questions to the research participants. Some questions are planned ahead of time, while others arise spontaneously during the interview. The ultimate goals and objectives of conducting semi-structured interviews were to explore English teachers' opinions regarding different challenges they encounter while teaching English language skills. Semi-structured interviews are regarded as one of the most trustworthy and essential instruments in qualitative research. The semi-

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structured interviews gathered specific information about L2 teachers' impending challenges and issues in educating English subjects that were insufficient in the study questionnaires. Seven open-ended questions were asked to the English teachers concerning challenges and variables that impede their creative teaching of English language skills at the secondary level. Hundred English teachers of secondary level were interviewed at random. The researcher demonstrated teachers' opinions of English language hurdles and issues based on thematic and content analyses of interviewee replies. The outcomes of a semi-structured interview performed among secondary English instructors reveal the varied views of English teachers about L2 teaching issues in the government secondary schools. The findings of the teacher interviews supplemented the questionnaire results. The researcher listened to the interviews several times for transcription, which greatly aided in creating distinct codes for analysis. Thematic content analysis was used as an analytical tool for the interpretation of English teachers' interviews.

The foremost goal of the semi-structured interviews was to support and validate the results of the questionnaire data and learn about teachers' perceptions and insights about L2 difficulties at the secondary level. The following are English teachers' perspectives on various issues and challenges in teaching English language skills.

1. Factors affecting L2 teachers' English language teaching

There was a wide range of comments from participants regarding the variables that impede teachers' expertise in instructing English language skills. Almost 80% of English teachers believe that effective English teaching problems are caused by a lack of students' perception of English Grammar and tenses. These are the primary causes of L2 teachers' creative teaching difficulties in English classes.

2. Lack of Teaching Resources and facilities at Elementary level

According to the interpretation of semi-structured interviews with English instructors, almost (75%) of the government schools do not have enough teaching tools and facilities to educate English language skills properly. The lack of teaching facilities and resources causes a severe issue for both English teachers and students regarding teaching and learning English language skills. Similarly, most English instructors said that most senior English teachers are ignorant of the use of current technology-based teaching techniques, notably in training English language skills in the government secondary schools Punjab, Pakistan Old and traditional ways and methods of teaching English topics are still used by teachers.

3. Overcrowded Classes at Elementary Level

During the semi-structured interviews, 88% of the English instructors stated that classroom overcrowding is one of the most significant challenges to teaching English skills effectively. Due to the short time of the lectures, class teachers do not deliver properly and examine their students' written work. This also limits students' ability to be creative while writing in English. The majority of kids in big classrooms do not receive individual attention from their instructors. Overcrowding makes it harder for teachers to provide appropriate feedback and comments on students' writing performance in class; hence, this issue teachers' achievement in English topics.

4. Students' Social Background

During the interview, almost (70%) of the class instructors replied that society and social conditions do not encourage and give chances for pupils to study English as a language rather than a topic because English is not adequately spoken and utilized in our culture. As a result, pupils do not have the opportunity to acquire English through their social settings. Furthermore, the bulk of the pupils come from impoverished and uneducated households. Such circumstances make it difficult for the teachers to improve English language expertise of their students more successfully. During the interview, the majority of English instructors stated that English is taught as a topic rather than a language at the basic level. Therefore the majority of children in elementary schools encounter severe English writing problems. Students are not given useful opportunities to study English as a second language, which impacts their performance.

5. Inadequate Content and pedagogy Based Teaching Training

The majority of English instructors (84%) replied that most teachers are technologically illiterate at secondary level schools due to lack of teaching facilities; resources and inadequate teaching training concerning language skills create difficulties for the class instructors to deliver their best efficiently. Teachers are not completely aware of the usage of modern English language teaching techniques and tactics. The Present system of teachers' training doesn't reform and update their teaching abilities in English language efficiently.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes with the desired results of the researcher. Many factors cause problems for English teachers to teach at the secondary level of government school students. Most of the samples gave almost the same responses about the hurdles they face while teaching English to the students. These factors are; students' social background, attitude towards their studies, disturbed and unfavorable study environment, and use of Native and mother tongue in the classroom. Furthermore, overcrowded classrooms, limited teaching facilities and resources, students' agitation, students' dependence on cramming. Unavailability of teaching A.V. aids, lack of departmental support regarding language skills, and students' insufficient knowledge of English grammar. No motivation by the language learners families, students' passiveness in inventive writing. No opportunity to speak English language outside the classroom and insufficient departmental teaching training. The above-discussed factors causing English teachers difficulties while teaching their students of secondary level were taken with the help of a questionnaire. The researchers also got the English teachers' more views about their hurdles through an open-ended interview. The responses of the teachers are that these following factors also create hurdles for them while teaching English at secondary school students; lack of students' perception of English Grammar and tenses, The lack of teaching facilities and resources at the elementary level, no special focus on English at the elementary level, lack of interest by the society especially by the parents on children' education and inadequate teaching training concerning language skills create difficulties for the class instructors to deliver their best efficiently.

The above-discussed factors prove to be the major barriers in teaching English effectively to secondary school level students. In such circumstances, very competent and effective teachers cannot give 100% results because most students do not have sufficient English language exposure before enrolling at the

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secondary level. In Pakistan, English is taught as a subject, not as a language, so the students focus on cramming the books and getting good marks in Secondary School Certificate. The other major reason for poor secondary level results is the enrollment of 100% students of Elementary level passed students'. The exam system at the elementary level is very poor. There is no concept to fail any student at the elementary level. So, a student who even cannot read or write gets enrolled at the secondary level. Such types of students create very serious problems for the English teachers of the secondary level.

The researcher would recommend that further studies be conducted on students' economic, social, and examination systems at elementary. Furthermore, the government should focus on English language rather than teaching it as a subject.

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