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Pedagogies and Challenges in English Language Learning in Undergraduate Programs in Pakistan: A Review

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Abstract: English has become a universal language for education, commerce, and research. In Pakistan, universities educate in English. This study examines prior research on developing learner self-direction and success in second language learning to help students confront academic and professional challenges. This research will look at the present condition of English language education in Pakistan, the challenges instructors and students experience in the EFL setting, and recommendations for policymakers and teachers to increase communicative competency and learner autonomy in Pakistan's higher education system. Undergraduates in colleges and universities employ a variety of learning methods to improve their communication abilities. University students are responsible and mature. Teachers' instructional techniques and linguistic skills may make pupils competent and responsible for learning. Learner autonomy promotes responsibility, planning, reflection, and strength-weakness identification. Proficiency in a second language promotes learning, independence and decision-making abilities. By offering social and physical space for language learning, students may progress well in EFL.

Key Words: Pedagogies, Language Success, Learning Challenges, Academic Excellence, Pakistani EFL Context

Introduction

In today's world, the ability to speak many languages is a must for living and travelling in many parts of the world. Language is a social need that enables us to make sense of our own experiences and those of the world around us and ourselves. Language is comprised of a number of different competencies, some of which include grammatical knowledge, social knowledge, knowledge of discourse, and knowledge of strategy. According to Hymes (1971), teaching a language should put less emphasis on teaching students grammatical rules and more on teaching students how to use the

language (Abduvasiyevna, 2022). This idea was favourably welcomed based on Chomsky's (1957) linguistic competence, which focuses on language definition (Harris, 2021). The claim made by Hymes that language is a social behaviour was congruent with Halliday's (1973) "meaning potential," and the communicative competence approach was backed by a large number of other academics working in the field of language study (Abduvasiyevna, 2022).

All teachers have always given the target language's structure a significant focus. The communicative language teaching (CLT) method emphasizes the students' communicative needs, models the curriculum after situations that actually occur in the real world, and places an additional focus on the rules of the language (Farooq, 2015). Throughout the last half-century, there has been a significant increase in the number of people speaking English across the globe, resulting in several changes being made to the methods by which the language is taught and learned. Both teachers and students in Pakistan are still becoming habituated to the communicative language teaching technique, but in western countries, where more conventional methods are the norm, it has already shown to be very successful. It was essential to research to determine whether or not Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is effective in the Pakistani context.

A Statement Regarding the Problem

This idea has been the subject of a great deal of research since it is essential in the present global context to use an approach to teaching languages that incorporates several facets in order to satisfy the needs of a diverse range of students and teachers. An assessment of the requisite requirements is necessary for all of this to occur. It is impossible for there to be successful learning without the engagement of the learners. Therefore, it is important to consider the learners' views and

goals while preparing for teaching and learning a language (Farooq, 2015). Once the needs of the students have been determined, CLT can be successfully implemented in the classroom through the use of function directions and the contextual relevance of the activities with everyday life, allowing students to become more self-reliant and enhancing their communication skills. Applying theory learned from research on learning English may facilitate students if teachers have access to such research. The investigation of autonomy is strictly theoretical. It is necessary to conduct additional research on learner autonomy at the undergraduate and graduate levels to compare the findings obtained in various settings. This is necessary due to the fact that the implementation of autonomy is not immediately apparent, and the vast majority of students are wholly reliant on their instructors (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018). Although little research has been done on learner autonomy, it is possible that this will help highlight the differences between the development of students and the teaching of language in a way that supports autonomous thinking and action (Borg, & Alshumaimeri, 2019). Researchers focused a greater amount of their attention on learning preferences and language teaching methodologies. Research in language teaching and learning was required on teachers' competence, autonomy, innovative teaching strategies, and learning assessment in CLT to close a knowledge gap (Manan & David, 2021).

Research Objective and Question

The primary objective of this study is to explore the literature to highlight the problems in English language teaching at the tertiary level and present a critical analysis of the situation. Furthermore, provide an outline to promote communicative competence and autonomy at the tertiary level in Pakistan. The study will answer the questions "What are the main challenges in

developing students' English language skills and self-direction, and what measures can help improve the situation at the tertiary level in Pakistan?"

Significance and Relevance of the Study

Learner autonomy and communicative competence have a considerable relationship, with autonomous learners obtaining good academic success and having more job alternatives (Reinders, 2010).; According to research published in 2013 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), receiving a standard university education does not ensure students develop their capacity for critical thinking, self-direction, or communication skills. The student is responsible for cultivating his or her "learning skills" Together with other skills such as technical competence, reading, numeracy, planning, self-confidence, leadership, and the ability to create teams, it is important to foster lifelong learning abilities such as communication and learner autonomy (Permana et al., 2019). According to Littlewood (1999), if we define autonomy in educational terms as the ability of students to apply what they have learned without the guidance of instructors, then autonomy would seem to be an undeniable goal for all learners. Autonomy can be defined as the ability of students to apply what they have learned without the guidance of instructors. This is because it is very evident that not a single pupil will ever have their teachers there with them for the whole of their entire life (Tham, 2018).

These are the most important skills for success in the business world due to the industrial revolution and globalization. Learners may profit from improved competence skills and more autonomy throughout their lives (Clark, 2012).

Because of the growing importance of the English language in today's world, possessing strong communication skills is essential for those who want to further their education, begin their own company, or work in a professional capacity (Rao, 2019). As a direct result of the adoption of this new paradigm, both teachers and learners are placing a greater emphasis on the cultivation of their communication skills. They failed to secure jobs due to their lack of competence in English, evident particularly during interviews. These graduates have a difficult time academically and later in life when finding employment Because English is taught and learned in every country, graduates with weak English backgrounds struggle both academically and later on when it comes to finding work (Fendrick, 2018). The majority of businesses are looking for graduates who are able to work well in teams, and on their own, make sound judgments, have flexibility and confidence, and have solid communication skills (Hikmawati et al., 2021).

Literature Review

Researchers interested in learner autonomy, According to Yasmin and Sohail (2018), the idea of the autonomy of the learner is relatively new to instructors and students in Pakistan; however, it is very important for preparing them to be independent and in charge of their learning. Learner autonomy is a term that John Dewey coined. Researching the best way to put this concept into action is necessary since supporting educators is critical. Unfortunately, students in Pakistani schools, colleges, and universities teach language as a subject, and efforts are necessary to guarantee that students' language competency is developed properly. It is essential to come up with a strategy to get beyond the obstacles and equip the children with the resources they need so that they can compete successfully in the modern world. According to Benek-Rivera and Mathews (2004), a creative method is more likely to attract students and keep those

students engaged in the material being taught.

A teacher who has independently obtained knowledge promotes it by acting as a facilitator and a source of information for the students in their classroom (Darsih, 2018). In Pakistan, the concept of student autonomy concerning language teachers needs to be developed, and the knowledge and skills of teachers about effective language teaching practices are the keys to providing a model to build learner autonomy. For Pakistani teachers to properly instruct their students in learner autonomy, they need to understand the concept. (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018). It is necessary to instruct students on how to learn, to acquaint them with new methods of learning, and to alter their perspectives on the process of language acquisition (Akici, 2015). For teachers to be qualified to carry out this responsibility, they need to have a level of expertise equivalent to that of experts in teaching English to speakers of other languages (Larsen-Freeman, 2018).

Urdu has taken over from English as the primary language of instruction and learning in schools and other institutions in India ever since the country's partition, which has made teaching English difficult and controversial. As English is a language that opens doors to new opportunities and fosters growth in the 21st century, it enjoys widespread support as the language of instruction and learning in educational institutions of a higher level. Today, people of all different kinds and origins are comfortable communicating in English (Irgashevich et al., 2022). Because of its importance on a national, global, and historical scale, the English language is used in all aspects of the nation's judicial, medical, economic, educational, and research systems (Rachid et al., 2018). This is true of elite and non-elite educational institutions. Some problems stem from the teachers, such as a focus on traditional grammatical procedures, the growth of vocabulary, a lack of feedback on students' weaknesses, and open correction of errors, both of which demotivate the pupils. They struggle not only with articulating, reading, and writing it but also with comprehending and acting upon the directives of their instructors., in addition, the students' limited communication abilities, lack of desire, limited vocabularies, and limited amounts of time spent practising all present challenges for the instructors (Fareed et al., 2018). Zahid et al., (2020) researched the problems facing Pakistan's higher education system and its prospects for the future. The results indicated that instruction was subpar, there was an inadequate amount of financing and training, insufficient focus on character development, and a proposal for more funding, training, equipment, research, student facilities, and political activities.

Critical Review and Analysis

The following is a detailed account of the results obtained from research carried out in teaching English to speakers of other languages, specifically regarding difficulties encountered in fostering communicative competence and learner autonomy.

Eed of Language Skills for Academic and Social Success

As a consequence of the spread of globalization, English has emerged as a universal language, and as such, it is highly valued in academia, business, and the professional world. Universities must take measures to ensure that their students acquire the necessary level of independence and competence in English language studies. Future domestic and international leaders, managers, educators, and business owners must develop intrinsic motivation and independence to succeed in their careers (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018).

According to the National Education Framework (2018) published by the Ministry

of Federal Education and Professional Training Pakistan (MFEPTP), the English language skills of Pakistani university students are inadequate, and there is a gulf between the educational and professional sectors in meeting the competency-based needs of undergraduates. According to a study conducted by MFEPTP in 2017, the educational system in Pakistan is having trouble living up to its potential in terms of enhancing the students' skills and information. Higher-order cognitive and communication skills are essential for young Pakistanis to compete in the global and domestic job markets. Pakistan's National Qualification Frameworks (2015) state that first-year college students should have better communication skills and more independence to effectively convey their ideas to various audiences and solve complex problems (Din, 2020).

Language Proficiency among Pakistani Efl Learners

Compared to other Asian nations, Pakistani students' level of language competence is lower. Pakistan is ranked 12th out of 21 nations in Asia and 50th out of 86 countries in the area by the EF English Proficiency Index (2018). Students' ability to acquire and remember linguistic knowledge is significantly hampered by the fact that university-level language classes do not follow any kind of predetermined curriculum framework (British Council, 2015). Additionally, the teachers' level of proficiency in knowledge and competency is up for debate. Text-based activities dominate traditional language teaching techniques at the tertiary level of instruction. According to a British Council report from 2015, additional research is advised to close the knowledge gap and confirm the data to track the advancement of communicative competence among Pakistani university students.(Zahid et al., 2020).

The majority of college grads lack the basic abilities needed for gainful employment (Employer Skill Survey, 2013). More than 500000 graduates are unemployed in Pakistan, according to a report from the country's Bureau of Statistics division that was published in the daily newspaper Dawn on March 18, 2018. Lack of communication and self-management skills, which employers in Pakistan place a high value on, contribute to unemployment in the country (Gurmani et al., 2022).

According to a Federal Public Service Commission of Pakistan (FPSC) report that was published in the newspaper Dawn on December 6, 2016, 92% of graduate and postgraduate level students who took the competitive examination for public service in Pakistan and were all from prestigious universities in Pakistan failed it in English. The fact that so many students failed the extremely difficult exam demonstrates problems with how English is taught in Pakistani universities (Aman-Rana, 2020).

Academic Success and Language Proficiency

"One nation - One vision," the government of Pakistan's 2025 campaign slogan, is based on the knowledge economy and aims to increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by fostering tertiary education. Higher education uses English as the medium of instruction, so students must have strong language abilities to advance academically (Nasir, Naqvi, & Bhamani, 2013). Students who lack proficiency fail English classes as well as other subjects (Abbas, 1998; Mansoor, 2003). Due to the circumstances, language proficiency has become a crucial benchmark for students to advance in their studies (Dar & Khan, 2015). Low academic success leads to dissatisfaction, and student satisfaction is crucial to achieving higher education goals. This can be accomplished by providing emotional support (Najeeb & Sabitha, 2013)

and increasing the students' motivation levels to achieve better academic results (Jurik, 2014). (Domench & Gomez, 2014). Because of their poor English skills, the students' confidence has been crushed, and they feel disconnected from the class and unable to participate in any way (Domench et al., 2016). The teacher's attitude and teaching style in the class contributed to the growing divide between students and teachers (Almubrak, 2016).

Inadequate Evaluation Systems in Efl Environment

Shamim (2017) notes that a thorough assessment and discussion of English demand in Pakistan is necessary. She added that the education system and teaching strategies should be reviewed because they primarily emphasise exam-based material and give students no opportunities to improve their literacy skills or use language effectively inside or outside the classroom. the key components of language teaching are teaching beliefs, approach, and syllabus, and teachers should set high goals to meet the demanding needs of the students (Hameed & Tahir, 2016). The evaluation of language learning is a crucial component, but the system in Pakistani institutions is flawed, and many factors are at play (Ahmad & Malik, 2011; Rehmani, 2003). Beliefs, motivation, personal ability, and attitude are all examples of different types of influences, including both those that come from inside and those that come from outside (Malik, 2005). Studies have shown that many students fail to complete their academic goals in schools, colleges, and universities because they are not proficient in English (Khattak, 2012).

English's Socioeconomic Status in Pakistan

English language proficiency is a prerequisite for advancement in the elite class in Pakistani society, a necessary skill for employment, and a crucial component of a graduate's personality. English language is an essential component of Pakistan's educational system and is necessary for academic and social success. Despite the importance of English in Pakistan's academic, social, and historical contexts, students struggle with language acquisition, which impacts their academic performance (Haidar, 2019). To assess learning outcomes and determine what assistance English language instructors provide to students, it is important to look into how they implement their theory of teaching to enhance the state of language learning in Pakistan (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018).

Situational Analysis and Opportunities to Promote Language Learning

The present study's purpose is to show how the idea of student freedom in language learning has been explained from multiple perspectives. The features of self-governing students are explored, and some information on how to encourage student autonomy growth in the language learning process is presented. Competence and autonomy are essential in language acquisition, as well as in everyday life and education. This is because of the innovative changes that occurred in the 1990s that placed students as distinct individuals at the centre of the language learning process, such as student-focused educational modules, the scheduled schedule, student preparation, the Project-based prospectus, and student-based training. As a consequence of student-centred approaches, the roles of the educator and student, especially their competence and ability, have shifted, and language students have taken on more major responsibility for their learning. As a consequence, concepts such as autonomy and the self-sufficient learner have been important in language education. Here are some suggestions for improving the EFL environment in order to promote independence and communicative skill (Benson & Voller, 2014).

- One of the most important ways to support kids in acquiring autonomy is to demonstrate learning systems. Technique preparation should be provided to pupils in order to equip them with a learning environment in which they may study autonomously. As a consequence, instructors must instruct students on how to create and implement compelling learning tactics. Furthermore, instructors should add preparatory activities to increase students' understanding of good learning practices and develop essential abilities.

- Second, the idea of helpful learning is one of the things to consider when creating self-reliant pupils. The idea is to establish a place in the classroom where students can openly ask and debate questions with one another and the instructor.

- Third, developing an autonomous English language classroom requires using portfolios.

- They also allow students to take ownership of their own progress toward both group and individual learning objectives. Portfolios allow students to document their learning, mastery, checking, and assessment processes.

- As a result, teachers' roles in fostering learner autonomy are much more clearly defined. They are critical in establishing a self-sufficient language learning environment for students.

- Student autonomy in promoting English as a foreign language plays an important role in this area. Students are initially connected to their learning and are extremely dynamic, resulting in more successful learning (Sun et al., 2022).

Brighouse (2018) asserts that humans are born with their independence. Furthermore, autonomy is frequently understood to imply the proposal of specific skills, routines, and methods for organizing the teaching and learning process. Autonomy is viewed as a multifaceted concept that necessitates a one-of-a-kind learning environment. Kunze et al., (2018) criticize these methodologies and advise that "autonomy is not a technique for adapting, but an attribute of the student's way to deal with the learning procedure."

- Cognitive theories of motivation offer useful frameworks for understanding and, in some cases, influencing how instructors and students interact with one another. Teachers may reflect on their ideas about how children learn and why some students succeed while others struggle with the tasks assigned (Hayes, 2000).

These studies enable instructors to decide whether or not to change the activities they assign to their students, the learning environments they create, and their verbal interactions with them. According to the literature review, it was necessary to investigate language teaching at the tertiary level in Pakistan to pave the way for a shift in language teaching methods and to assist students in developing their communicative competence and autonomy as learners.

Conclusion

A good base activity should be selected at the beginning level to test these suggestions. This activity can essentially incorporate the following systems: First, time allocation in EFL educational programs must be altered to allow for more task-based activities that encourage students to participate more actively in the learning process. Second, EFL teachers should pursue continual professional development to keep their experiences relevant and up to date with industry trends. Overcrowded classes were identified as one of the major obstacles to CLT adoption in an EFL college environment. Third, a genuine increase in student

enrolment must be considered. Priority should be given to the classroom environment to make it more interesting and engaging for student-based activities. This involves outfitting classrooms with cutting-edge technology such as communicative exercises, information at students' fingertips, multimedia, and dynamic tables for group activities.

Furthermore, professional development for teachers and cutting-edge technology can produce positive results and help students improve their English language proficiency to confidently and independently handle their communication needs in tertiary education and later in their professional careers. In order to determine the amount of learner autonomy and communication competence among instructors and students, extensive study is necessary. This data will be utilised to guide policy choices, and instructors and trainers at Pakistani higher education institutions will be able to construct courses better.

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