

# Challenges Encountered by English Teachers at the Elementary School Level in Pakistan: An Investigative Study of Government and Private Schools

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In the 21st century, characterized by technological advancements, the teaching of English continues to pose challenges in certain countries. Pakistan is among these countries where English teachers encounter various difficulties, particularly at the elementary level. To investigate these challenges, a cross-sectional study has been conducted, selecting four private and four government schools. The aim was to identify and analyze the numerous barriers faced by English teachers. The findings of the study indicated that there are several obstacles on the part of teachers, students, and management, which collectively hinder the successful learning of English language skills. These barriers contribute to the failure of English language learning in the educational context of Pakistan. Hence the analysis shows that successful communication in the English language is still desirable in the context of elementary schools in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** *English Teachers, Elementary School, Pakistan, Government and Private Schools*

## 1. Introduction

English is a contemporary language that plays a significant role in unifying the world onto a single platform. It is utilized as a tool to gain knowledge and seek guidance. English is the official language of numerous international organizations, including the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the International Olympic Committee. It is also widely spoken in various countries worldwide, making it a lingua franca or common language of communication. Due to the widespread use of English, it has become an essential tool for education, business, and social interaction. Knowledge acquisition and exchange have become more accessible with the aid of the English language. Educational institutions offer



courses in English as a means to impart knowledge to students. Similarly, multinational companies use English to communicate with their clients and employees worldwide, fostering effective communication and collaboration. Moreover, English has also contributed to the development of modern technology and science. Many of the groundbreaking scientific discoveries and technological advancements have been published in English. English serves as a medium of communication between researchers from different parts of the world, promoting collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Hence it can be said that English has emerged as a universal language that has enabled people from different backgrounds to connect and communicate effectively. Its significance in the modern world cannot be overlooked, and its contribution to the fields of education, business, technology, and science is undeniable. Paik (2008) pointed out that English is interpreted for surviving in the global economy; therefore, the need for English language learning is rapidly growing in the market.

Pakistan, with its various languages, is a multilingual country where English has traditionally been the dominant language. Braine (1999) states, English has become the universal language so it is compulsory to educate people in a foreign language. Despite the fact that the prerequisites and relevance of the English language are at an all-time high, as in Pakistan, it has been observed that students who have a good command of English can easily get admission to prestigious institutions. On the contrary, those students who are not proficient in English may be denied admission to renowned educational institutions. Furthermore, in Pakistan, all board and competitive exams are conducted in English, making it the official language of such assessments. Consequently, students who lack the ability to communicate effectively in English and lack a sufficient understanding of the language are placed at a disadvantage (Zeeshan, 2013). In Pakistan, English proficiency is a necessity for getting an education and qualifying for job opportunities. Unfortunately, the lack of proficiency in the English language is having a negative impact on the academic and professional careers of individuals who received their education from government schools (Farida, 2018). The primary reason for this setback is the insufficient fluency in English language instruction in government schools and colleges, leading to a compromised grasp of the language by students. As a result, a considerable number of individuals are encountering challenges in fulfilling their educational and professional aspirations.

In the same of line reasoning, Teaching English in Pakistan presents a considerable challenge due to the linguistic diversity of its student population. Specifically, the educational institutions of Punjab province in Pakistan have adopted English as the primary language of instruction in their curriculum. This means that the subjects taught in schools, colleges, and universities are primarily delivered in the English language. As a result, students are expected to have a strong grasp of English to effectively understand and participate in their education. This approach to curriculum design is intended to prepare students for academic and professional success in an increasingly globalized world where English serves as a dominant language of communication. Meanwhile, in the district of Toba-Tek-Sing, people are generally bilingual or multilingual, with the local languages of Pirmahal including Punjabi,

Urdu, Punjabi Saraiki, Pashto, Jhangvi/Jangli, and Doabi. A multilingual classroom has features such as native language, regional language, and local languages (Malone, 2007). In this context, Punjabi serves as the primary language for students in Pirmahal, with Urdu taught as the secondary language and English as a foreign language. These multilingual classrooms pose unique challenges for English teachers, particularly at the primary level, as students may struggle with learning a third language when their focus is primarily on mastering their second language. As a result, teaching English in such a context requires a thoughtful and nuanced approach that takes into account the linguistic and cultural diversity of the learners. Despite the challenges, the adoption of English as a primary language of instruction in Punjab schools and colleges reflects the importance of English as a global language, and the need to prepare students for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

The objective of the current study is to conduct cross-sectional research with the aim of identifying the obstacles confronted by English language teachers in multilingual classrooms in Pirmahal. The elementary level has been chosen as the focus of the study due to its fundamental role in laying the foundation for the students' future academic pursuits. As a result, the teachers at this level bear significant responsibility for the learners' educational development. The findings of this research study will be of great value to both English language teachers and students, as it aims to provide insight into effective teaching and learning strategies that can be applied in multilingual classroom environments.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

The study will be aimed to answer the following questions

1. What are the challenges faced by English teachers in government and private schools at the Elementary level?
2. What is the notable contrast in the pedagogical approach between the English language teachers in government and private elementary schools?

### **2. Literature Review**

As we know, in today's world, the ability to speak English fluently has become a necessity for people residing in non-English-speaking societies, especially in developing countries like Pakistan. To overcome the challenges of a globalized world, it has become essential for individuals to have a good command of the English language. This is because English is widely used as a medium of communication in various fields such as education, business, politics, and technology. Therefore, learning English has become an important requirement for people to succeed in their personal and professional lives in today's globalized world. Varela et al., (2010) emphasized the significance of English language instruction as it increasingly plays a pivotal role in education and contributes to the global growth of learners. This means that English's role in education is critical and cannot be overstated. They suggest that English experienced a significant turning point after 1970, mainly due to its contribution to the growth of academic participation in education yet there have been many problems



facing this teaching and learning process. In most cases, the researchers have generally found that various factors contribute to the difficulties faced by students in learning English as a second language. These factors include inadequate pedagogical techniques employed by teachers, disinterest among students, inadequate facilities, and insufficient training among teachers.

Teaching English in multicultural classrooms is a universal issue affecting both English students and teachers worldwide, not just in Pakistan. The presence of local languages in these classrooms often gives rise to a lot of obstacles that both teachers and students must contend with when communicating in English. As a result, navigating multilingual classroom environments can prove to be an intimidating task for English teachers, requiring them to grapple with a range of complex linguistic issues. As Ismaili (2015) conducted a study investigating the ethnic conflict in Macedonia, focusing on the language barriers faced by both teachers and students in a multilingual classroom setting. The research was carried out at South East University, the sole institution that enables Albanian and Macedonian students to pursue their studies in their native languages or opt for English as the medium of instruction. The study's findings demonstrated that the linguistic and cultural diversity among the students and teachers made it challenging for them to teach and learn English. The research revealed that the students had a positive attitude toward using their first language (L1) in class. Additionally, classroom observations indicated that the students expressed frustration when instructions were solely communicated in English. Based on the results, the study recommended that L1 should be incorporated alongside English as a teaching and learning strategy in multilingual classrooms. In the same vein, Dhillon and Wanjiru (2013) undertook a research study that aimed to explore the challenges associated with teaching English in the multilingual context of Kenya. The study highlighted a diverse range of obstacles that both language teachers and learners encounter when acquiring English in such an environment. In such cases, the teachers might need appropriate training to enable them to teach English effectively in a multilingual setting.

At the elementary level of education, overcrowded classrooms represent a significant challenge encountered by English teachers. This obstacle is particularly detrimental in language classes as it restricts the level of engagement for each student in the learning process. Due to the sheer number of students in a single class, some learners may not receive the necessary opportunities to actively participate in classroom activities. It has been recommended by Tayeg (2015) that an optimal language classroom should have a limited number of students, preferably ranging between 20 to 25 individuals.

In Pakistan, English is introduced as a subject to students from a very early stage, starting from grade 1. However, despite this early exposure to English, students in higher grades still struggle to achieve proficiency in the language and communicate effectively. The issue of inappropriate English extends beyond the elementary and secondary levels, as students pursuing bachelor's degrees at universities in Pakistan continue to struggle with spoken and



written English. This challenge may arise from traditional pedagogical practices, the inadequate learning resources employed in the teaching of English, as well as insufficient opportunities for language practice. Khan (2016) contends that students face challenges in acquiring English language proficiency at the Pre-University level due to insufficient teaching and learning materials and ineffective pedagogy. The insufficiency of communication proficiency in the English language can be attributed to the inadequacies in the pedagogical approaches employed in teaching and learning English, which have resulted in unfavorable outcomes.

Additionally, it can be claimed that in some cases, effective pedagogical strategies are contingent upon contextual factors. For instance, educators may need to tailor their teaching approaches to match the students' current proficiency level, as not all learners possess the same cognitive abilities. Some students may require additional support to grasp certain things, while others may have a higher aptitude for learning and assimilating knowledge more rapidly. Hence, it is essential for teachers to take these individual differences into account and adjust their instructional practices accordingly. Similarly, another research study has been conducted in the multilingual classrooms of Mianwali and Bhakkar districts in Punjab, Pakistan, to investigate the challenges encountered by English teachers and learners. The results showed that college students confront difficulties in acquiring the English language owing to various factors, such as untrained teachers, educational policies, assessment methods, and a vast curriculum (Khan, 2016).

Nonetheless, many scholars have conducted research into these problems and are confident that they can be resolved through the application of logic and innovative teaching strategies. Multiple studies conducted by Abbas (1998) Mansoor (2003) and Warsi (2004) have highlighted the inefficacy of English language teaching practices in Pakistan, further emphasizing the deficiencies in the pedagogical methods employed in teaching and learning the English language. English has an indispensable role in Pakistan as it is the language of instruction for a wide range of academic fields, including science, social science, technology, and medicine. In addition, all major literary works, newspapers, and other print media are published in English. Thus, it can be stated that English is crucial for individuals who seek to obtain higher education and engage in professional and academic discourse in Pakistan.

In addition, the adequacy of language materials is a crucial element. The utilization of inadequate materials in some cases can negatively impact the learning outcomes of the students. The quality and appropriateness of the language materials employed can greatly influence the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the classroom. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers select and utilize appropriate language materials that align with the students' needs and learning objectives. Failure to do so may result in a less effective learning experience and suboptimal learning outcomes. As Rizvi, et al., (2014) conducted research, the struggles with teaching and studying English as a foreign/second language in Iranian and Indian secondary schools were found. According to the findings, Indian students had greater



access to English audio-visual aids (such as listening or watching videos, TV news, and programs). They read English newspapers and magazines more than five times as compared to the Iranians, the vast majority of them probably have found the contents of their English textbooks intriguing. Teachers should be concerned with assisting students in developing effective strategies for learning English as a foreign language and gaining instructional autonomy (Akbari, 2014; Akbari and Tahririan, 2009; Jafari and Kafipour, 2013; Tabatabaei and Hosseini, 2014).

In a similar vein, Hişmanoğlu (2005) pointed out that despite the availability of contemporary teaching resources, English teachers face difficulties in training their students in English through literature. In order to enhance English language learning, it is not sufficient to solely rely on competent teachers. While having a competent teacher is important, it is equally essential to provide appropriate and effective English teaching materials. A lack of appropriate and effective English language teaching materials may lead to ineffective pedagogy, resulting in poor learning outcomes for students. Therefore, it can be inferred that both competent teachers and appropriate materials are necessary to achieve effective English language teaching and learning.

As pointed out by Patil (2008) teaching English not only imparts knowledge to learners but also helps them improve their listening, reading, speaking, and writing abilities. Teaching acts as an engine for growth and change in every community. Without communication with individuals and teaching them becomes difficult (Abrar and Mukinin, 2016; Haryanto and Mukminin, 2012; Younas et al., 2020).

In certain cases, English language teachers may lack the necessary competence in English, which could significantly impact their ability to effectively teach the language to their students. In such situations, teachers may not possess the requisite training or knowledge of appropriate language teaching methodologies, which could hinder their effectiveness as language educators. This can result in students not achieving their desired learning outcomes and failing to reach their language proficiency goals. It is crucial for language teachers to possess a strong command of the language they are teaching and be equipped with the appropriate teaching techniques and strategies to impart knowledge effectively to their students. Failure to do so can result in suboptimal learning outcomes and impede the students' progress in acquiring the language. As, Tufail, Kanwal, and BadarToor (2015) carried out a study in the Pakpatan district, Punjab, Pakistan, to investigate the difficulties encountered by students in learning English. The research revealed that there is a need to engage university-trained educators to facilitate workshops for English language teachers in schools. Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that such professional development opportunities be provided to enhance the quality of English language instruction in schools. In the same line of reasoning, Cameron (2001) emphasizes the significance of teacher preparation, interaction, and competence in foreign language teaching, along with the use of the latest resources and creative and enticing approaches to enhance the interest of early-stage



learners in the targeted language. Additionally, Cameron provides key concepts that language teachers and organizers should consider, including how students attempt to establish new language comprehension and how they can provide a better environment for learners through interactive resources and activities. The importance of using common pronunciation, context, and analogies from different sources in classrooms, and the fact that the comprehension of the foreign language of learners relies on what they do in classrooms.

Additionally, there are problems related to the English language proficiency of teachers themselves and the lack of emphasis on communication skills in teacher training programs. These issues collectively result in subpar English language education and impact the quality of English language proficiency among students. These are not the only problems some researchers have faced obstacles in terms of the different dialects of English. The existence of multiple English dialects can pose a challenge for both English teachers and learners, as each dialect has its unique features in terms of orthography, morphology, syntax, and even the way of communicating in social situations which contributed to pragmatics and discourse. This variation in the English language can cause confusion and difficulties for teachers and students trying to master English as a second language. Mansoor (2003) and Rahman (2004) have both recognized that English teachers in Pakistan encounter various issues and obstacles when teaching English in educational settings. They both agree that many English teachers in Pakistan are not proficient in the language themselves and often lack the necessary training to effectively teach the language to their students. These factors contribute to a lack of quality English language education in Pakistan.

Another obstacle that English language teachers face is the challenge of dealing with multiple dialects, which can create communication barriers and hinder the learning process for students. The existence of various dialects in English, including but not limited to British English, American English, and Australian English, poses a challenge for English language teachers in establishing a standardized form of English for consistent teaching. This challenge is particularly evident in the Pakistani context, where textbooks may utilize either British or American English, and some teachers may opt for a British accent while others prefer an American one. This dilemma can be perplexing for the teachers in deciding which dialect to adopt and teach successfully. In such cases, teachers must navigate these differences to ensure effective communication and comprehension in the classroom. Matsuda (2002) proposed that the presence of multiple dialects is considered to be a significant obstacle in teaching English due to several reasons such as the difficulty in selecting words since there are different words for one object, variations in spelling, and grammatical structures. This creates a challenge for English teachers as they need to navigate and understand the differences in dialects to effectively teach the language.

Another hindrance that is observed in effective classroom management is crucial for successful English language teaching during the language learning process. Teachers often face difficulties in managing the classroom environment, which can hamper the learning



process. Salem (2011) identifies classroom management as a critical concern for English teachers and suggests that effective classroom management is essential for successful teaching. The use of appropriate classroom management techniques is believed to be conducive to positive academic outcomes. It follows that institutions lacking the necessary infrastructure may be unable to provide optimal teaching and learning experiences. Therefore, it is imperative that English teachers prioritize maintaining a disciplined classroom environment to ensure effective instruction. Pomerantz and Pierce (2004) conducted a study to investigate the challenges encountered by teachers in their daily instructional routines and their proficiency levels in teaching their subject matter to students. The findings of this survey facilitated a deeper comprehension of the teaching environment and pedagogical practices. Effective training of English language teachers holds paramount significance in ensuring the quality of English language education.

Along with the previously mentioned challenges, the constrained time available for English language teaching is another hurdle that impedes the progress of language learning. English class is often overshadowed by the emphasis placed on science subjects in many educational institutions. As a result, students tend to dedicate more time and effort to study science subjects and often neglect the necessary practice needed to develop proficiency in the English language. This neglect can lead to limited proficiency in English, which can have negative implications for the students' academic and professional futures. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to promote and prioritize English language learning alongside science subjects to ensure students receive a well-rounded education (Moin & Shahbaz, 2018). Furthermore, the time limitations in the classroom setting, coupled with the vast curriculum to be covered, often lead to insufficient attention being given to language instruction. As a result, students may not have enough time to practice their English language skills, hindering their overall proficiency in the language.

Student anxiety can also pose a significant problem for English teachers in a number of ways. Firstly, anxious students may struggle to fully engage with class materials and activities, which can hinder their language learning progress. Anxiety may also negatively impact student participation, with students feeling too self-conscious or nervous to speak up in class or interact with their peers. In some cases, student anxiety may lead to avoidance behaviors, such as absenteeism or dropping out of classes altogether. Additionally, anxious students may require additional support or accommodations, which can place a strain on teachers' time and resources. Therefore, it is important for English teachers to be aware of student anxiety and to take steps to help students feel comfortable and supported in the classroom. Umrani, & Lohar (2015) examined, in one of their research projects, they tried to look into the anxiety of studying a foreign language at a university in Lasbela, Baluchistan, Pakistan. The study's findings revealed that students are hesitant to speak in English because they are worried about making mistakes, and this is the most significant barrier to learning the language.

Although teaching English in Pakistan is faced with several challenges and difficulties, the



language's status as a driving force for the country's future growth is a motivation for the population. This status is the reason why the English language is seen as a force that inspires every Pakistani to strive to master it. Rahman (2016) proposed that despite the obstacles in its acquisition, the perceived benefits of English proficiency make it a highly valued skill in Pakistan, which is seen as vital for success in education, employment, and social mobility. Thus, it is evident that English language proficiency is essential for Pakistan's progress and development, and its importance motivates individuals to overcome the difficulties encountered in learning and teaching the language.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The objective of this research study is to identify the difficulties and hindrances encountered by English language teachers in their multilingual elementary classrooms. To accomplish this goal, the researcher has adopted a quantitative research approach for this study. The current research study is predominantly quantitative, as it aims to collect and analyze numerical data through established research methods. The researcher has specifically chosen to use Dornyei's (2011) quantitative research paradigm, which relies on data collection techniques such as interviews, surveys, and questionnaires, with statistical analysis carried out through software tools such as SPSS.

#### **3.1 Participants and Research Tool**

The current study involved a total of 24 English teachers (both male and female) as participants, with 12 teachers being selected from four government elementary schools and the other 12 teachers from four private elementary schools in Pirmahal, district Toba-Tek-Sing, Pakistan. To gather data, the research employed a combination of questionnaires and interviews with English language teachers from both government and private schools. The questions posed in the interviews and questionnaires were designed to be open-ended and unstructured, allowing the study participants to express their ideas freely and think creatively. The researcher obtained permission from the relevant school principals to visit the selected government and private schools for conducting the interviews.

#### **3.2 Delimitation of the Study**

This study is limited and is focused solely on examining the challenges confronted by English teachers at the elementary level, disregarding the issues and hindrances faced by the pupils. Additionally, the research is constrained to the geographical area of Pirmahal, located in the district Toba-Tek-Sing, where the data has been collected from eight elementary schools comprising four government-run schools and four private schools.

### **4. Research Findings**

Following the analysis of the collected data, the findings are organized and discussed within the overarching theme of the challenges encountered by English teachers in both government and private schools at the elementary level. The purpose of this discussion is to delve deeper

into the specific difficulties experienced by teachers in each educational sector. The analysis of the results highlights a diverse set of challenges experienced by both government and private school teachers in the context of English language instruction. However, there are certain challenges that are specific to either government Elementary school English teachers or private school English teachers.

#### **4.1 Challenges Met by Government and Private Elementary Schools Teachers**

English language teachers at the elementary level frequently confront a range of challenges that impact their teaching practice. These challenges encompass a variety of issues that can impede the effective delivery of English language instruction. Some common hurdles they encounter include the following.

##### **4.1.1 Overcrowded Classrooms**

The issue of overcrowded classrooms is a significant challenge faced by both the teachers Private as well as government teachers at the elementary schools, leading to various problems such as increased stress levels and dissatisfaction among teachers and students. The lack of personalized attention and high levels of noise in such environments can further contribute to disciplinary issues and impede the development of meaningful relationships between teachers and students. Insufficient opportunities for language practice and limited support for language learning difficulties can result in students lacking the proficiency required for effective communication in a foreign language. Inadequate time for teaching exacerbates these challenges, limiting opportunities for students to acquire critical English language skills such as speaking and listening. It is not uncommon to see a class of as many as seventy students. Furthermore, many students come from communities where studying is not a tradition. (For detail see Tayeg, 2015).

##### **4.1.2 Lack of Policy**

English teachers have recognized a decline in the quality of English language instruction in both government and private schools. This decline is attributed to the lack of a cohesive policy outlining the importance and role of English in the school curriculum. Consequently, there is a pressing need to establish a clear and comprehensive policy defining the role of English in the curriculum. This will ensure that students are provided with effective language learning strategies, enabling them to attain higher levels of proficiency in the language. Such proficiency is crucial for their academic and professional advancement.

##### **4.1.3 Lengthy Syllabus**

The Government and Private school teachers contend that the English language teaching syllabus exhibits a substantial scope of content and learning goals, thereby establishing a comprehensive and expansive curriculum. The syllabus encompasses diverse language skills encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing, alongside grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. It encompasses a wide array of subjects, language structures, and proficiency

levels that must be addressed within the designated timeframe. The extensive nature of the syllabus presents a formidable obstacle in terms of adequately covering all essential components while guaranteeing comprehensive comprehension and skill enhancement among students.

#### **4.1.4 Inadequate Time for Language Practice**

Initially, there is a lack of provision for an additional devoted class specifically designated for English language practice. Furthermore, the allocated time for English as a subject does not allow for language practice. As a result, students are deprived of the opportunity to engage in structured language exercises and activities that are essential for fostering language proficiency and fluency. In typical practice, teachers often allocate an additional class specifically for language instruction. This arrangement is necessitated by time constraints, as it allows for the effective management of time only when an extra period is available.

#### **4.1.5 Lack of Qualified Teachers**

In the context of primary education, the dearth of English language teachers with exceptional qualifications and competencies has led to inadequate language skills and substandard pronunciation. Guidance and support for English language teaching have been neglected, leaving instructors to their own devices in terms of delivering impactful lessons. As a result, conventional techniques that do not promote a communicative and student-focused approach are commonly used.

#### **4.1.6 Inadequate Teacher Training**

The inadequacy of training programs for English teachers at the elementary level poses a challenge to their ability to effectively carry out their duties. It has been observed that some individuals believe that teaching English does not demand any specialized training. However, the majority of English language teachers lack sufficient knowledge and training on the latest and most effective methods of teaching the language. Consequently, their teaching approaches are often based on outdated methods, and they may struggle to keep up with the evolving trends and techniques in language teaching. Following a duration of approximately 2 to 4 months, where the English receive training focused solely on language training, without any emphasis on the subject matter. Subsequently, after this period, teachers relocate to other cities to undergo further training.

#### **4.1.7 Pedagogical Practices**

The predominant teaching approach in the majority of schools is the ineffective translation method. The significance of oral exercises, which form the foundation of a successful language acquisition process, is often neglected. The students' inadequate oral practice hinders their ability to construct simple sentences in English independently. Instead, they rely on memorizing predetermined answers to questions with the help of their teachers.

#### **4.1.8 The Erroneous Exam System**

The current exam system is flawed as it enables students to succeed by simply memorizing a few standard answers, without having to comprehend the course material. As a result, although the student may pass the exam, they often lack practical language skills and are unable to communicate effectively in written or oral English. The deficient level of spoken English in schools can also be attributed to the absence of oral exams.

#### **4.1.9 Insufficient Resources**

The use of audio-visual aids in teaching has become a popular and effective approach to enhancing students' engagement and understanding of the lesson. However, these aids are not readily accessible in elementary schools for language learning, resulting in an inadequate learning environment. The unavailability of basic teaching aids such as flashcards, maps, photographs, models, filmstrips, gramophone records, and tape recorders, severely hampers the quality of English instruction. Some classrooms may not even have proper blackboards or colored chalk to facilitate teaching. Without these essential resources, it is challenging to improve the standard of English education in these schools.

#### **4.1.10 Poor Awareness of Goals**

The scarce attention given to the goals of English language instruction is a prevalent issue among educators. English teachers frequently focus solely on exam preparation, overlooking the broader objective of developing students' language abilities. In many cases, language is treated as a subject to be memorized rather than a skill to be learned. As a result, students often struggle to acquire fundamental linguistic skills, such as effective communication and writing proficiency, which are critical for language acquisition. Furthermore, students' motivation to read English-language literature is often hindered due to their limited language proficiency. Addressing this issue requires a shift in the approach to teaching English, placing greater emphasis on fostering language skills and instilling a passion for reading and writing.

#### **4.1.11 Lengthy and Intricate Syllabus**

The research findings indicate that the lengthy and complex syllabus is a significant issue. Teachers in government schools face constraints and are given a specific time frame to finish the English curriculum. Language activities in the classroom help enhance cognitive abilities and intercultural understanding. Teachers reported that the English curriculum is lengthy, complex, and time-consuming, which poses a challenge given the students' cognitive abilities. Henceforth, special training, seminars, and short courses for English language teachers are necessary to address this issue.

#### **4.1.12 First Language Interference**

The process of learning a second language is often influenced by the learner's first language. Learners tend to transfer the structures, context, and cultural aspects of their native language to the foreign language they are learning. This can result in errors and interference, as L1



habits are carried over to L2 habits. In the case of elementary school students in Pakistan, for whom English is typically their third language, and they often communicate with their peers in their native language. This can present a challenge for teachers, who may struggle to prevent the interference of the students' first and second languages in their English learning. In Pakistan, Urdu is the dominant lingua franca and is widely used in both rural and urban areas. English is primarily used for official written documentation and correspondence, with only a small segment of the population using it regularly in their day-to-day communication.

#### **4.1.13 Intrinsic Motivational**

Intrinsic motivation is driven by the inherent interest in self-fulfillment, pleasure, and mastery of a subject, which leads to a desire to learn. Students who are intrinsically motivated are inclined to participate in a specific activity due to a personal interest or internal enjoyment. However, not all students share the same level of motivation or intent for learning English. While some perceive English as a subject of importance for communication, others perceive it merely as a course that needs to be passed. The majority of students consider learning English a chore and lack interest in the subject. Such students lack the motivation to engage in class and focus solely on achieving high grades to complete the course.

#### **4.1.14 Lack of Group Discussion**

Group discussion is crucial in facilitating conscious language awareness for second language acquisition. Consciousness and language are interdependent and intertwined, as learners need to deliberately process the meanings of what they hear and learn to effectively acquire the target language. In the context of schools, group work involves a collaborative effort of a small group of students toward achieving a common academic objective. The unavailability of group discussions in language learning environments is therefore a significant hindrance to learners' ability to develop their language proficiency through meaningful interaction and conscious processing of linguistic information.

#### **4.1.15 Lack of Media and Technology**

The utilization of media and technology in language classrooms is considered significant in facilitating an authentic teaching environment. However, Elementary school teachers frequently encounter challenges in providing adequate media resources such as print, graphics, animation, audio, and motion pictures, which are crucial components for language teaching. The sole instructional tool employed is the traditional whiteboard, limiting the incorporation of multimedia resources and interactive learning experiences. Consequently, the teaching and learning methods predominantly rely on verbal explanations, written materials, and instructor-led discussions, with minimal visual or multimedia enhancements available to enhance comprehension and engagement among students. The effectiveness of media and technology in language classrooms can be observed through two primary modes of learning. Firstly, students can effortlessly acquire unconscious knowledge through exposure to media and technology as they enjoy these tools. Secondly, teachers believe that technology can greatly assist in enhancing

students' motivation, enjoyment, and confidence in language learning, particularly in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as reported in a recent teacher survey conducted in 2019 where 87% of teachers expressed this view. These opinions also inform us that there are so many conventional teaching strategies in Pakistan. We know that for any kind of development in any language, particularly for teaching a second or foreign language, a certain method is important. The use of modern techniques for teaching English in Pakistan is a dream because teachers do not know modern techniques for teaching English.

#### **4.1.16 Unqualified Parents**

Parents lack the qualifications and expertise required to communicate in English with their children. They do not possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and educational background to provide comprehensive and structured instruction. As a result, they are unable to offer the required guidance and support in their children's learning endeavors. The absence of qualified parental involvement in teaching can hinder students' academic progress and impede their overall educational development.

#### **4.2 Challenges Exclusive to Government Schools Teachers at the Elementary Level**

Teachers in particular teaching English in government schools face considerable difficulties in teaching English. This can be attributed to a range of factors such as a lack of interest from the parents' side, absentees of the students, students' lack of interest, a ban on students' punishment, school-based teachers do not have sufficient English teaching experience, and are not provided the opportunity to attain any English language training, and students having different mental levels of understanding are in the same classroom, the lack of opportunities to practice English and emphasis on the use of the first language, cultural background, appropriate infrastructures, overcrowded classrooms, and the program does not meet the needs of students. These considerations obstruct English teaching and learning activities.

#### **4.2.4 Govt Policy**

According to government regulations, the use of punishment has been strictly prohibited, and students cannot be failed up to the elementary level. However, it is observed that students in government schools may struggle to acquire language skills effectively without the presence of discipline enforcement, as each student possesses different mental abilities.



#### **4.2.2 Different Learning Styles and Paces**

Elementary classrooms comprise students with diverse learning styles preferences, and paces. This requires teachers to utilize differentiated instruction techniques to meet the individual needs of students, offering various learning opportunities that cater to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. However, the presence of intelligent, average, and dull students in the same classroom can have a negative impact on intelligent students. The absence of separate classes based on students' mental abilities prevents the provision of tailored instruction, hindering the intellectual growth and advancement of the more capable students.

Additionally, due to the ongoing of COVID-19 pandemic, a prevailing phenomenon has emerged wherein students between the ages of 14, 15, and 16, who have experienced a significant educational gap of 2 to 3 years, are enrolling in classes 5th, 6th, or 7th. These students, unfortunately, lack foundational knowledge and skills, to the extent that they struggle with writing the alphabet correctly. The extended break from formal education, brought about by the pandemic, has resulted in substantial learning loss and academic setbacks for these older students, necessitating additional support and remedial interventions to bridge the knowledge gaps and bring them up to grade-level proficiency.

#### **4.2.3 Inadequate Infrastructure**

The inadequate infrastructure in government schools poses significant obstacles to English language instruction. Teachers are unable to effectively teach the language due to the absence of a conducive environment. The lack of proper classrooms, often in a ramshackle state, further hinders the teaching and learning process. Insufficient facilities fail to meet the educational needs of both students and teachers. Additionally, the recurring issue of unreliable electricity supply significantly disrupts the learning environment, particularly during the hot summer months, making it challenging for teachers to create an appropriate and conducive atmosphere for effective language instruction.

#### **4.2.4 Lack of Expert Teachers**

A significant challenge in government elementary schools is the practice of assigning a single teacher to teach all subjects. This means that one teacher is responsible for instructing students across various disciplines, such as mathematics, science, English, social studies, and more. This situation places a considerable burden on the teacher, as they are required to possess expertise and proficiency in multiple subject areas. The teacher must not only have a comprehensive understanding of each subject but also adapt their teaching methods and strategies to effectively convey the content to students. Furthermore, the limited number of teachers in these schools' results in larger class sizes, reducing the opportunities for individualized attention and personalized instruction. Consequently, this approach can potentially impact the quality of education and hinder students' overall academic development.

#### **4.2.5 Influence of Status Symbols in Choosing Private Schools**

In Pakistan, there is a prevailing trend where parents tend to transfer their children from government schools to private schools once the students start showing improvement in their academic performance. This shift is driven by the perception that private schools offer a higher level of prestige and value compared to government schools, regardless of the students' positive progress within the government educational system. Despite the students' satisfactory performance and growth in the government school environment, the allure of private schools is seen as a status symbol and a means to provide better educational opportunities. Consequently, the inclination towards private schools often overlooks the potential benefits and achievements that can be attained through the government school system.

#### **4.2.6 Socioeconomic Constraints and Language Choice in Government School**

The majority of students enrolled in government schools typically come from working-class families who cannot afford the fees associated with private schools. As a result, a child's social background significantly influences their language development. These students often maintain a strong attachment to their mother tongue and consistently speak languages such as Punjabi, Urdu, or Saraiki, which are reflective of their cultural and regional heritage. This preference stems from their desire to preserve their cultural identity and a belief that they may not assimilate seamlessly into the target language culture. Consequently, the influence of social background on language usage and preservation of the mother tongue can impact the acquisition and proficiency of the target language among these students within the government school setting.

#### **4.2.7 The Challenge of Elderly and Inadequately Qualified Teachers**

At the elementary level, there is a prevalent issue of elderly and inadequately qualified teachers. These teachers lack confidence in speaking the English language and struggle with correct pronunciation and limited vocabulary. Insufficient preparation time and a lack of expertise in English language instruction are evident among these older teachers. To compensate for their language deficiencies, teachers often resort to using Urdu and Punjabi to communicate with students, assuming that students will grasp concepts more easily in their mother tongue. Consequently, the teaching of essential language skills is neglected. The presence of underqualified teachers and their reliance on native languages hinder the comprehensive development of students' English language abilities at the elementary level.

### **4.3 Challenges Faced by Private Schools Teachers at Elementary Level**

Private school teachers at the elementary level encounter specific challenges in teaching English, as outlined below:

#### **4.3.1 Lack of a Conducive Language Environment**

Students do not engage in the usage of the English language beyond the confines of the classroom. Language usage among students is limited to the duration they spend within the class, and they revert back to their native language once they step outside the classroom.

#### **4.3.2 Grading System**

Parents often exert interference in their children's education, prioritizing their desire for academic achievement and securing top positions rather than nurturing their childrens' creativity and overall competence. The focus primarily revolves around achieving high academic ranks rather than fostering a well-rounded educational experience that encompasses critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity. As a result, the emphasis on rote memorization and exam-oriented performance supersedes the development of independent thinking, innovation, and holistic growth in students. This parental interference may hinder the students' ability to explore their true potential, pursue diverse interests, and develop a broader range of skills beyond academic success.

#### **4.3.3 Complex and Demanding Syllabus**

Certain syllabi from esteemed institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge pose significant challenges for teachers, making the teaching process exceptionally difficult. The complexity and intricacy of these syllabi create obstacles in effectively imparting the content to students. Furthermore, the absence of specific training programs or professional development opportunities for teachers aggravates this issue. As a result, teachers find themselves inadequately equipped to handle the unique demands and intricacies of these challenging syllabi, which negatively impacts their ability to effectively deliver the curriculum and support students' learning needs.

Therefore, it can be inferred that English language teachers in the Punjab region encounter various obstacles that hinder the pedagogical process of English language instruction. These impediments include insufficient student involvement, adverse social circumstances, large class sizes, limited teacher-student communication, inadequate academic levels of students, overcrowded classrooms, utilization of conventional teaching methodologies, an ineffective evaluation system, and insufficient access to educational resources. Due to the region's linguistic diversity and socioeconomic inequalities, English language teachers face difficulties in teaching the subject matter effectively in English and may have to rely on translating it into the students' native languages. Furthermore, learners' first language significantly influences their ability to acquire and retain the target language.

### **5. Conclusion**

To summarize, the existing circumstances surrounding English language teachers at the elementary level in Pakistan do not establish an ideal setting for efficient English language teaching and learning. By recognizing a range of obstacles, policymakers, educators, and



stakeholders can devise targeted strategies and interventions to address the specific requirements of English language instruction and learning in the Pirmahal district of Toba-Tek-Sing, Punjab, Pakistan. This research carries substantial implications for the field of English language education in Pakistan. It is crucial to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of both government and private sector initiatives in achieving desired outcomes. Moreover, it is evident that additional measures and interventions are necessary to achieve success in language instruction and learning. One notable challenge confronted by teachers in both government and private schools is the language barrier, which obstructs effective communication and instruction in English and presents difficulties in language acquisition for students. The circumstances in Punjab, particularly in underdeveloped regions, exacerbate the challenges associated with successful language learning.



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