
FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNING OF ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE IN REMOTE AREAS OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Students at all level in Pakistan face difficulties in learning English as a second language. This study aims to sort out some factors which affect learning English as a second language in Pakistan. The target population for this study is public and private secondary schools in rural areas Ex FATA. Firstly, Kurram, Awrakzae, Khyber and Bajawar Agency” were taken out of seven agencies of Ex-FATA. Secondly, sixteen secondary schools, four each from the selected agencies, were chosen keeping public and private equal in proportion. Thirdly, 320 students, both boys and girls in equal ratio were randomly chosen from the selected schools. A survey was conducted using a questionnaire for collecting data about academic and social factors affecting learning English as a second language. The data was analyzed statistically by applying t-test to comprehend the problems. It was concluded on the basis of analysis that social and academic factors affect learning. The researchers recommend that grammar including tenses, voices, narrations, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and reading should be taught methodically at higher secondary level and the teachers must be equipped with teaching techniques by preparing systematic material

KEYWORDS

English as a Second Language (ESL), rural areas, Secondary Level, Private, Ex-FATA

INTRODUCTION

Communication has always been significant in bridging the cultures of various regions in globalized world where language has been used as the major tool for human dealings. Bilingualism and multilingualism have remained in practice by majority of the people in different regions where pidgins and creoles were created for effective communication. The use of English language began in British Indian subcontinent as a Pidgin and Creole by the traders on the coastal lines which was later declared the official language. Today in Pakistan, English language is widely spoken in professional offices besides the national language.

The Great Britain ruled one fourth of the world. The regions which remained under their rule, particularly sub-continent implemented English as an official language during their reign. The influence of English language is still dominant on these regions. Pakistan also holds both English and Urdu as the official and institutional languages. According to Parveen (2013), eleven percent of 180 million use English as a language in Pakistan.

Linguistic Map of Pakistan

Pakistani society is a cluster of many languages and cultures with a range of dialectical variations in each single language; therefore its map is complicated in terms of determining languages boundaries. Each province of Pakistan has one or more core languages which are widely used and 'the emblematical status of English is due to its association with the elite which has made it prominent language in Pakistan (Haque, 1993., Rahman, 2002 & Rahman, 2010). The decision to promote English language in Pakistan was politically motivated where the government pledged to cater special arrangement at institutional level but the implementation of it fell short due to inadequate educational framework (Shamim & Rashid, 2019). The government raised slogan to provide the opportunity of learning English as a potential tool to every student but unfortunately the current provision at institutional level and the lack of skilled teachers hinder the policy implementation (Jadoon et al., 2020). Therefore the learning and teaching of English remained the major issue for every government in Pakistan (Shamim, 2008).

English as a Second Language

Acquisition of second language has become an increasing necessity, especially in countries where English is the second language. It is not only a status symbol, but is also a definite source of career progression and job opportunities (Cook, 2001). Like elsewhere, Pakistani student also needs to master four language skills which include

reading, writing, speaking and listening. Out of the four language skills, writing is not a natural activity, therefore, exclusive treatment and training is required to learn this skill hence, it stands in contrast to other three skills of language learning (Aronoff & Rees Miller, 2007). Though the significance of English is well established at all levels in Pakistan, yet it is still considered a difficult subject of studies at rural level. Even in some remote areas like Ex-FATA, it becomes more difficult to promote English because of numerous reasons including social or cultural barriers and the lack of adequate environment that seriously discourage students to acquire English language. Consequently, students from rural backgrounds show poorer results in the subject of English as compared to those from urban areas. Many studies have been carried out to find the reasons that influence the learning of English in these areas. Nariswariatmojo (2011) found that some external factors have badly affected the English learning process. According to Farooq, Chaudhry and Shafique (2011), students, family, school and peer group are the main factors directly influencing the learning of English.

The Factors influencing learning of English as a second language in Pakistan may be categorized as *Internal Factors* i.e. those factors which are carried along by a learner to specific learning context including age, personality, motivation, experience, cognition, and mother tongue; whereas, *External Factors* include a particular language learning situation including curriculum, instruction, culture & status, motivation, and access to native speakers. Jabeen and Akhtar (2013) pointed out citing Lantolf (2003), Mendelson (2010), and Putman (2011) that language cannot be learnt in isolation; rather it is a social endeavor in its essence. It is curious to study all these factors for research, at least partially, as for majority of the population in Pakistan takes education in anti-educational environment.

Ahmad and Rao (2012 b) reveal that physical learning context plays a pivotal role in students and teachers' presence, participation in work, achievement and well being. Ellis, (2005) says that learning environment affects learners' cognition, behavioral development and vulnerability. It is evident that low competence level in English among students of Pakistan has been a factor in slower socio-economic growth of the country (Saeed & Rao 2012). To improve this indicator higher education institutes are important to establish the environment for students so that they may compete in the future market. For this HEC recommended establishing English Language Teaching Reforms (ELTR) and launched numerous Teacher Training programs and refresher courses to overcome on this aspect. This project (ELTR) is specially designed to enhance the college and universities faculties (Zaidi, Javid & Baig 2020).

In Pakistani schools, however, hardly any consciousness of this sort exists on the part of those who form part of language teaching-learning process, especially in schools and colleges. It is common that knowledge constructed by an individual through

development and experiences, along with these other factors are also in action that are invisible and important: affective factors which include self-esteem, motivation, anxiety, attitudes, and empathy; whereas Cognitive factors include thinking, attention, memory, aptitude, intelligence, and interest (Krisi, Nagar & Knoll, 2020., Adwani & Shrivastava 2017) .

Empirical research reveals that better physical conditions for learning resulted into better grades for students who were equipped with better communication skills; whereas poor physical conditions for learning proved detrimental in gaining good grades and students in such conditions were found with poorer communication skills. Brooks (2011) carried out a study to work out the relationship between physical learning places and the students learning achievements. He pointed out that a learning situation with better technological facilities results into higher achievements as compared to those situations where learning conditions involve lesser technological facilities.

A French Digest ERIC(2000) enumerates upon the contextual factors in SLA saying that these contextual factors can be viewed from language point of view, the learner's angle, and the process of learning. Language related aspects involve linguistic difference that exists between the two languages, students' proficiency in mother tongue, their knowledge of the second language, dialect of their mother tongue, relative status of students' language in the community and attitude of society towards students' mother tongue. Learner related factors include peer pressure, presence of role models, and assistance from home. whereas the factors related to the learning process involve learning styles, motivation, and classroom interaction.

Students and teachers differ from common people in their approach towards language – they acquire linguistic proficiency for academic purposes and educational purposes, for knowledge, for research, and for instruction etc in addition to its use as lingua franca. But unfortunately in Pakistan, this linguistic proficiency remains incompatible with their linguistic performance, as the latter almost always remains very low. According to Hoodbhoy (1998), English language of students is very weak because of poor knowledge of contents, and less effective teaching materials and techniques. Consequently, students educated at such institutions may be classified as semi-literate. Farooq et al (2011), states that student's achievement is negatively correlated with low Socio Economic Status level of their families as it proves an impediment in having access to sources of learning (Duke, 2000; Eamon, 2005; Lopez, 1995).

This study was designed to analyze social and academic factors that affect learning of English because the findings of numerous researches revealed that majority of the students fail to show a satisfactory level of performance in English as a second

language in Pakistan. This situation necessitates looking at query of factors associated with failure or success in learning English at secondary level. The proposed study aims at exploring a variety of academic and social factors affecting student achievements of subject English, both in public and private secondary school students.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the academic and social factors affecting learning of English as a second language in Ex-FATA, Pakistan.
2. To identify academic factors that affect learning of English language at secondary level in Ex-FATA.
3. To identify social factors that affect learning of English language at secondary level in Ex-FATA.
4. To compare the academic and social factors affecting learning of English language of Public and Private sector students.
5. To determine relationship of these factors with students achievement in English.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. There is no Significant Difference of Academic Factors Affecting Learning of English Language for Public and Private Secondary School Students.
2. There is no Significant Difference of Social Factors Affecting Learning of English Language for Public and Private Secondary Schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study broadly relate to the descriptive domain of research. The information was collected from students of public and private secondary schools of Ex-FATA through survey procedure where questionnaires were served as the main tools. The statements of the questions were framed on five point Likert scale. The qualitative data collected for the study were obtained from questionnaire and Achievement Test. Inter-items correlation Cronbach Alpha technique was used for internal consistency. The value of each cluster of the questionnaire rose above 0.90. The results were quantified by SPSS software package. The data were then examined by using Mean and Standard Deviation and t-test.

Population

The population comprised of 3000 students both boys and girls of Grade-X studying in all the 198 public and 80 private secondary schools of seven agencies of district Kurram. Simple random sampling technique was applied to choose 30 principals, 150 teachers, 300 parents and 260 students of 30 private secondary schools through a systematic procedure.

Sample of Schools and Students

During the first phase, “Kurram, Awrakzae, Khyber and Bajawar Agency” were chosen from total seven agencies of the Ex-FATA. In the Second phase, sixteen secondary schools, four each from the selected agencies, were chosen by taking 2 schools from public and 2 from private sector. In the third phase, a sample of 320 students, both boys and girls in equal ratio were randomly chosen from the selected schools. The following table shows the number of schools as located in each Agency.

Table 1: Sample of Schools and Teachers

	Sectors	Schools	Students (Male)	Students (Female)	Total Students
Kurram Agency	Public	2	20	20	40
	Private	2	20	20	40
Awrakzae Agency	Public	2	20	20	40
	Private	2	20	20	40
Khyber Agency	Public	2	20	20	40
	Private	2	20	20	40
Bajawar Agency	Public	2	20	20	40
	Private	2	20	20	40
Total		16	160	160	320

Research instruments

Questionnaire included information about English teacher and teaching, curriculum, text books, attitudes towards learning English, personal ability and management of institution as academic factors, while English anxiety, instrumentality, family influence and society influences as social factors. Sixteen schools (8 public and 8 private) from four sampled agencies of Ex-FATA served as the sample of the study.

Table 2: Classification of Items in Tool

Variables	No. of Items
Academic Factors	
Demographic Information	i - ix
Eng teachers and teaching	1-5
Curriculum & text books	6 -8
Attitudes towards Learning English	9 -11
Personal Ability	12-14
Social Factors	

English Anxiety	15-17
Family Influence	18-20
Society Influence	21-25

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This part deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through questionnaires, interviews and achievement test which hold information regarding public and private secondary schools of Ex-FATA and their students pertaining to year (2005-16).

Academic factors

Table 3: *English Teaching Methodology Affects the Learning of English*

Questionnaire Items			Mean	Std. Dev	T	df	Sig	0.05 P	Prediction
1	English teacher uses English language in the classroom		2.62	.686	10.67	137	.000	<0.05	Sig
2	English teacher allows students to use Urdu language in class		2.01	1.070	.080	137	.937	>0.05	Not sig
3	Eng teacher encourages students to speak English in class		1.83	1.017	-2.01	137	.047	<0.05	Sig
4	Eng teacher uses English language with students outside the classroom		1.93	1.027	-.746	137	.457	>0.05	Not sig
5	English teacher generates discussions in English to encourage students' participation		1.70	1.044	-3.43	137	.001	<0.05	Sig

Table 4: Curriculum & text books Affect the Learning of English

Questionnaire Items		Mean	Std. Dev	T	df	Sig	0.05 p	Prediction
6	Curriculum Strengthen your speaking skills	2.27	1.071	2.94	137	.004	<0.05	Sig
7	Curriculum has exercises to practice speaking skills	1.65	1.030	-3.97	137	.000	p<0.05	Sig
8	Curriculum gives same importance to Eng speaking as to reading/writing	2.25	1.038	2.788	137	.006	<0.05	Sig

Table 5: Attitudes towards Learning English Affect the Learning of English

Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	Sig	0.05 p	Prediction
9 You like (atmosphere of) your English class	1.78	1.030	-2.48	137	.014	<0.05	Sig
10 You like improving your English language	1.65	.868	-4.71	137	.000	<0.05	Sig
11 You feel excited when hearing English speakers	1.71	.890	-3.83	137	.000	<0.05	Sig

Table 6: *Personal Ability Affects the Learning of English*

Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std Dev	t	df	Sig	0.05 p	Prediction
12 You speak English language fluently	1.94	1.052	-.648	137	.518	>0.05	Sig
13 You can speak Eng but hesitate to speak in public	1.75	.997	-2.99	137	.003	<0.05	Sig
14 You can express your opinion in Eng during discussions	1.89	1.072	-1.19	137	.236	>0.05	Sig

Tables 3 to 6 depict the academic factors that affect the teaching and learning of English language in the secondary schools of Kurram, Awrakzae, Khyber and Bajawar Agency. These academic factors include English Teaching Methodology, Curriculum & text books, Attitudes towards Learning English and Personal Ability. The P value >0.05 against all listed variable is highly significant confirming the hypothesis of the researcher with the exception of two items in **Table 3** which were against the predictions.

Social factors

Table 7: *English Anxiety that Affects the Learning of English*

Questionnaire Items	Mean	St.D ev	t	df	Sig	0.05 p	Prediction
15 You get nervous when you speak English in school	2.62	.686	10.67	137	.000	p<0.05	Sig
16 You think your friends will laugh at you when you speak Eng	1.79	.970	-2.545	137	.012	p<0.05	sig

17	You feel that your classmates speak English better than you	1.99	.970	-.088	137	.930	p>0.05	Not sig
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Table 8: Family Influence that Undermine or Accelerate the Learning of English

	Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	Sig	P .05	Prediction
18	Your parents are educated and speak English	1.90	.898	-1.327	137	.187	<0.05	Not sig
19	Your family members discuss the daily matters in English	1.90	.930	-1.28	137	.202	>0.05	Not sig
20	Your parents watch English channels like BBC, CNN and encourage you to watch it	2.02	.908	.281	137	.779	p>0.05	Not sig

Table 9: Society Influence that affects the Learning of English Language

	Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	Sig	0.05 p	Prediction
21	Your friends & relatives encourage you to speak English	1.90	.907	-1.32	137	.191	> 0.05	Not sig
22	Majority of your neighbors speak English	1.90	.930	-1.28	137	.202	>0.05	Not sig
23	Your neighbors think that speaking Eng means forgetting the importance	1.73	.956	-3.30	137	.001	<0.05	Sig

	of Pak culture								
24	Your neighbors believe that you should speak local or national language to preserve your culture	2.36	.957	4.356	137	.000	<0.05	Sig	
25	Your friends are surprised when you speak to them in English	2.36	.957	4.356	137	.000	<0.05	Sig	

Tables 7 to 9 depict the social factors that affect the teaching and learning of English language in the secondary schools of Kurram, Awrakzae, Khyber and Bajawar Agency. These social factors include English anxiety, instrumentality, family influence and society influences. The P value >0.05 against all listed variable is highly significant negating the hypothesis of the researcher with the exception of two item in Table 7 and three items in Table 9 which were as predicted.

Hypothesis - 1: There is no Significant Difference of Academic Factors Affecting Learning of English Language for Public and Private Secondary School Students

Table 10: *Fata secondary school Studetns' responses for academic factors*

Items	Private Sector (N= 160)					Public Sector (N=160)				
	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
English teacher uses English language in the classroom		90	30	40			40	60	60	
English teacher allows students to use Urdu language in class	40	30	40	50			20	60	80	
English teacher uses English language with students outside the classroom	20	70	50	20			20	70	70	
English teacher generates discussions in English to	50	50	40	20			30	30	10	

Hypothesis -2: There is no Significant Difference of Social Factors Affecting Learning of English Language for Public and Private Secondary Schools.

Items	Private Sector (N= 160) (N=160)	Public Sector
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	S A	A	N	DA	SD A	S A	A	N	D A	S D A
You get nervous when you speak English in school		50	100				60	96		
You think your friends will laugh at you when you speak Eng		20	50	80			48	60	48	
You feel that your classmates speak English better than you			60	60	30		60	60	36	
Your parents are educated and speak English		20	40	80	10		60	84	12	
Your family members discuss the daily matters in English		20	30	40	60		36	36	48	36
Your parents watch English channels like BBC, CNN and encourage you to watch it		10	50	50	40		60	60	36	
Your friends & relatives encourage you to speak English			60	90			72	72	12	
Majority of your neighbours speak English			60	90			72	84		
Your neighbours think that speaking Eng means forgetting the importance of Pak culture			20	50	80		72	72	12	
Your neighbours believe that you should speak local or national language to preserve your culture			20	50	80		12	60	72	
Mean			24.60							34.36
S.D			10.32							10.96
Calculated			3.35			df				P
t- value		Tabulated	1.96			304				0.0025

Table 10 & 11 shows the comparison of Social Factors influencing learning of English language for public and private school secondary students. Mean of social factors of public school students is 24.60 with standard deviation 10.32; while the mean of students in urban areas is 34.36 with standard deviation 10.96. Calculated value of t is 3.35. The value of t is greater than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 levels. Hence the hypothesis "There is no significant difference of social factors influencing learning of English language for public and private school students" is rejected. It implies that social factors influencing learning of English language for public and private school students differ significantly. The effect of social factors on private school students is significantly better than the public school students.

Table 12: Students' Performance/Achievement Tests in Eng Language Skills

Test	Secondary Schools	Gender	No of Errors	%age	Mean	S.D	t	P
Reading	Private	Male	297	34.62	0.97	1.00	5.62	.000
		Female	561	65.38	1.61	1.75		
	Public	Male	536	40.98	1.75	1.39	4.11	.000
		Female	772	59.02	2.22	1.45		
Writing	Private	Male	337	34.39	1.10	1.21	7.87	.000
		Female	643	65.61	1.85	1.23		
	Public	Male	451	37.70	1.47	1.19	6.89	.000
		Female	745	62.30	2.14	1.26		
Listening	Private	Male	1129	45.10	3.69	1.56	2.29	.022
		Female	1374	44.90	3.95	1.33		
	Public	Male	3492	42.93	11.41	5.11	4.85	.000
		Female	4642	53.07	13.34	5.02		
Speaking	Private	Male	787	43.55	2.57	0.97	4.59	.000
		Female	1020	56.45	2.93	1.04		
	Public	Male	1310	42.36	4.28	2.03	5.30	.000
		Female	1782	57.64	5.12	1.99		

* $P > .01$ $df = 652$

Table 12 shows the numbers of errors made by higher secondary school students in sentence arrangements, grammar, comprehension, listening and speaking tests.

CONCLUSIONS

The academic factors significantly affect the learning of English Language at Secondary Level. Teachers use English language in the classroom but they don't use English with students outside the classroom which is affecting their progress in learning language.

Social factors significantly undermine the learning of English as a Second Language at Secondary Level. Teachers use English language rarely in the classroom only. The academic factors negatively affect the Boys more than girls where as social factors positively affect the Boys more than girls in urban areas. Academic factors are significantly better in boys than the girls. The Social factors for boys and girls do not differ significantly in rural areas.

Findings show numbers of errors made by higher secondary school students on the measure of sentence arrangements, grammar, comprehension, listening and speaking tests. There is significant difference between the male and female government school students of secondary level in English language skills. The private school students showed significantly better performance as compared to public school students who made higher errors in listening and speaking. Their writing errors were found more in results. Since only 32 students took part in the listening and speaking tests, while 68 hesitated and did not participate in listening and speaking tests.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the current research was to analyze the academic and social factors affecting learning of English as a second language in Ex-FATA, Pakistan. The academic factors which affect the learning of English in Ex-FATA include English teacher and teaching, curriculum, text books, attitudes towards learning English, personal ability and management of institution as academic factors, while English anxiety, instrumentality, family influence and society influences. The findings of the research second the opinion of Hoodbhoy (1998) who also concluded that English language of students is very weak because of poor knowledge of contents, and less effective teaching materials and techniques.

The study also explored the social factors affecting the learning of English Language which include English anxiety, instrumentality, family influence and society influences. The findings of the study coincide with the research of Crosnoe, Johnson & Elder, (2004) who also concluded that the family factors, school factors and peer factors negatively impact the English Language learning of the students.

The study also explored the relationship of both social and academic factors with the achievements of the students. The study concludes that students of public school committed more errors in listening and speaking as compared to the students of private schools in Ex-FATA. These findings are in line with the research of Farooq et al, (2011) who also explored the relationship of social and academic factors with the performance of students and drew similar conclusions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommend that grammar including tenses, voices, narrations, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and reading should be taught methodically at higher secondary level and the teachers must be equipped with teaching techniques by preparing systematic material. The Provincial government may revise the recruitment criteria to appoint well versed English teachers with the skill of language and its teaching. The parents should also encourage their children to watch and listen English channels like BBC, CNN and English documentary programs to improve their correct English speaking and fluency.

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